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A
PRESERVATIVE
Against the growing
Infidelity and Apostacy
OF THE
PRESENT AGE, &c.

[Price 1 s. 6 d.]

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PRESERVATIVE

Against the growing

Infidelity and Apostacy

OF THE

PRESENT AGE,

IN THREE

DISCOURSES

L A T E L Y

Deliver'd before the University of OXFORD,
at St. Mary's Church: The two former afterwards
at the Temple, London.

By WILLIAM TILLY, D. D.

Rector of *Albury* and *Godington* in *Oxfordshire*, and
late Fellow of *C. C. C. Oxon.*

With a large PREFACE occasion'd by the late
publick Prosecution of *Woolston's* Blasphemies.

*Let your Speech be alway with Grace, seasoned with Salt, that
ye may know how ye ought to answer every man, Colof. iv. 6.*

*Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh
you a reason of the hope that is in you, 1 Pet. iii. 15.*

We also believe, and therefore speak, 2 Cor. iv. 13.

*They corrupt others, and speak of wicked Blasphemy; their talk-
ing is against the most High, Psal. lxxiii. 8.*

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane*,

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ITALY 1823

THE
NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

TO

THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

240

1823

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T H E
P R E F A C E.



THE just and necessary Zeal and Process of our Government against the bold and daring insults of Impiety in the present age, besides the many other Great, and Happy advantages we enjoy under it, has in a more peculiar manner recommended it to the love and esteem of all good Men and Christians; and we have great reason to hope it will bring down a signal blessing on it from the GOD of Heaven, whose eyes ^{2 Chron. xvi. 9.} run to and fro throughout the earth, and who very nearly and narrowly observes what regard is had to his Holy name
2
and

and honour by and in the Kingdoms and Governments of men. And GOD himself, and the world can witness, what and how earnest care has been taken to suppress that very prophane and impious Spirit of Infidelity, that is so far of late gone out into the world, and yet prevails. And though this has been lately done, more eminently indeed, in the notorious example of one person, in himself a most contemptible miscreant, of no worth, value, regard, or consideration, yet one, that, in a loose and degenerate age, through the fault or folly of others, not by any strength or force of his own light, empty, frothy, foul, insolent, impious, and infamous objections, might have been apt enough, as well as most inclin'd to do mischief in the

world; and to influence the men of un-

learn'd, ignorant, and unstable souls to-

wards their own destruction. To this man

now, we see, the High Wisdom and Ju-

stice of our Laws, and of those Great

and Good men that are set over them,

have thought it fit and necessary to give

a severe and seasonable rebuke, to our

common and greatest comfort.

And

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And 'tis to be hoped, that none of these ill men hereafter will ever find our Laws too slack, or those that guard them too remiss to put in always a timely check and reprehension to such outrageous, impious insolence, that thus stands in defiance of all authority both Sacred and Civil: Thus proudly and foolishly concluding with it self, Our ^{Psal. xii.} tongue is our own, who is Lord over⁴ us? The Law indeed must proceed by its wonted steps and measures, in a calm, leisurely, and regular method; but, surely, it will ever take hold of such impiety and blasphemy at last: Nor can there be a nobler design, or juster concern for the Law to engage in, than in the defence and protection of the Gospel of CHRIST; both in his Holy word and doctrine, and in the great honour due to his Divine and most sacred name and person. If the Laws in any Christian country could not do this, especially where the Civil power has, in a great measure, taken upon its own hands the safety and protection of the Church of GOD, which is our present State; those laws would, surely, be thought to stand in need of some completion,

pletion, or amendment. But to say this, or think so meanly of our Laws, would be a severe censure and reflection on the Legislative power, and therefore cannot be here our case in England. There can be no such suspicion of the wisdom and goodness of our great Law-givers, both now and in the former ages; nor of those most just, learned, and admirable Patriots, that are entrusted with the Execution of our Laws at present, and preside over them, for GOD's honour and the good of men, Spiritual as well as Temporal; as we have found so lately to our great and general Satisfaction, and to their own eternal Honour. Those Great and Worthy Persons therefore that either promoted or prosecuted this so very just and righteous a cause, had all the reason in the world to expect a good Issue to it, and to hope to see the happy fruits of their religious and fervent intention to so Good and Holy a purpose; and to be both outwardly and openly satisfied in the prosperous Event of this their pious design, as well as in the secret and inward conscience of their own Integrity. The Integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness

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verfenefs of transgressors fhall destroy them.

*There are two most remarkable examples of a Devout and Religious Zeal in Scripture; that of Holy Phineas under the Old Testament, and that of St. Paul under the New, which I have often reflected on with a peculiar esteem and admiration: And, I think, I have GOD's own authority for my doing so. That Noble act of Phineas was not of a high, rash, ungovern'd, heady zeal, as some men have vainly imagin'd, who have drawn it to countenance their own bad, unwarrantable practices; but 'twas an act Authoriz'd by GOD himself, from the mouth of his servant Moses, as our judicious and learned * Bishop Sanderfon has* ^{*Serm.II. ad Cler. §. 30.} *very well suggested, and I think is sufficiently countenanc'd from the Scripture text it self. And how does Almighty GOD speak of him on this great occasion! In terms of the most High importance, acceptance, and regard! with the* ^{Num xxv. 11, 12.} *most Firm and Forward resolution and readiness to bless him for it, both in his person and family for ever! And that St. Paul was such a peculiar and chosen* ^{Act ix. 15. Acts xiii. 47.}

B

vessel

47.

vessel to bear the name of CHRIST before the Gentiles, and Kings, even unto the ends of the earth, *which is the High character GOD himself gives of him, and the great office he design'd him to, was, in all probability, with regard to that noble, ardent activity of soul, that strong, sprightly, fervent, constant earnestness and zeal of his, in the propagation and defence of GOD's Holy truth and honour above others. How did his heart burn within him, when any occasion of offence, of sin or error, was offer'd to any, the least of his disciples!*

2 Cor. xi.
29.

Who is offended, *says he, and I burn not? And again, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.*

How very near those truly noble and excellent persons that rule over us have endeavour'd to imitate those great Primitive patterns of a Holy zeal, I am not able fully to express, though I ever so much desire it: So very truly and highly indeed have they deserv'd of the Church of GOD! And what thanks are not due to them, or what can sufficiently be paid them for the same! That they have so very nearly, and tenderly

*derly consulted and espous'd GOD's Holy Honour, and the sacred interests of his Divine Truth! and particularly of late, in their so very just, and therefore most highly justifiable, so truly Christian, and therefore indispensable prosecution of Infidel principles and practices in the person of One, a most virulent, impious wretch, and unbeliever; and have therein so far provided for their own and the common peace, by putting a stop, or a check at least to a most blasphemous, railing, envenom'd, inveterate, irreverent tongue and pen; of one that is an equal enemy to GOD and man, and therefore justly hated and abhor'd of both; * Condemn'd of GOD before, and now condemn'd of men; Deservedly miserable, infamous, and loathsome in this present world, and for whom there must for ever remain hereafter, without a very severe* Prov. xiii.
repentance indeed (if he can yet † re- † I Joh. v.
pent, and has not already sinn'd too far 16.
to be forgiven) the sad, deplorable, inconceivable, unsupportable effects of an

* He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God, Joh. iii. 18.

Infinite, Everlasting, Almighty power and wrath awak'd, incens'd, provok'd
 Jude 7. *to the utmost, even the Vengeance of Eternal Fire. For this most wicked, impious man flies out upon Almighty GOD himself; and in the language of*
 Job xv. *the HOLY SPIRIT, he stretches out his*
 25, 26. *hand against GOD, and strengthens himself against the ALMIGHTY. He runs upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler: Tearing*
 — xviii. *himself in his mad and envious anger;*
 4. *and most arrogantly, proudly, and horridly aspiring to rend even GOD's own Holy and Eternal SON, his Only Begotten, his well-beloved SON from his bosom, from his most Blessed and Divine Embraces.*

Thus far have our wise and good governors shewn their high concern for GOD's glory, and the happiness of his Church and People: And I hope in time this publick good example will influence all of us in particular. And that all of us, of the sacred Order at least, that are fit and able for this spiritual war, shall readily rise up like the children of Israel, in so good a cause, Knit
 Deut. iii. *together*
 18.

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together as one man; *and*, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom *these vain wretches so impiously defy, shall bravely resolve, go out, and pursue these Lewd Benjamites, these Blaspheming Boasters, these Sons of Belial, with such sound and vigorous applications, till we leave them none remaining.* For who are these uncircumcis'd in heart and ears, *that they should thus insolently defy the servants of the Living GOD? And who that believes the Truths of Religion in earnest, if he is able, would not be willing to speak and act at such a Time as this? Which therefore, I hope, will be some excuse at least for me, for the forwardness and weakness of this my little attempt at present, as well as justify me in my further designs hereafter.*

There have been some former controversies, indeed, relating to Religion and the Church, in which I my self, as I believe the world is not entirely unacquainted, have sometimes engag'd with those degrees and measures of zeal and warmth that were thought enough, perhaps,

perhaps, a little too much by some; but of this I can assure all those whom it may more especially concern, that if there were really that ground and foundation for it I once apprehended and was persuaded there was, I would still pursue them with the same application of an honest zeal and industry that I have done already. For what call or cry can be louder, or more piercing in the ears, or upon the heart of every honest Englishman at any time than this, that his Church and Constitution are in danger?

*But 'tis our happiness after all, that we have out-liv'd our fears, and have found our selves by the Event so very luckily mistaken. And that we have such good and just reason to change our opinions of some persons at least, though not of things; not more especially of that most excellent and worthy Cause, if it were truly and apparently in danger, which, at present, we are well assured it is not. How long it shall continue not to be so, must not be left to the restless importunities and wicked endeavours of the enemies to our Church
and*

and Government, that would continually aim and strike at both (for if they strike at either, they strike at both) but under the wise, over-ruling power, direction and good providence of Almighty GOD, and the Pious, Prudent, and Faithful Care of our Most Religious and Gracious King; whose Great Ancestors, properly so call'd, in the House of Brunswick and Lunenburg (the most antient Family in Europe), some of the very † first that countenanc'd and promoted our Reform'd Religion, and gave it the very name of Protestant, by their brave and generous resistance, and Protesting against the Imperial, Popish Edicts and Power, that were gone out against it to suppress and stifle it. And it must be his present most Excellent Majesty's Person and Royal Family, who must support it still within these Realms, if we intend not to be utterly undone.*

But now we are call'd to controversies of a Higher nature, not to plead for and defend the rights and security

* Spencer Syllog. Genealog.

† Sleidan, Histor. German. Reformat.

of a national religion and interest, but the very First, and Essential Principles and Doctrines of our Christian Faith, against a generation of sinners, of
 2 Pet. iii. *whom it was before prophesied, that*
 3.
 1 Joh. ii. *they should come, and even now already*
 13. *are they in the world; appearing openly and barefac'd, with the most downright impudence of Impiety; Deriding*
 1 Tim. iv. *our most Holy Faith; and denying the*
 1.
 2 Pet. ii. 1. *LORD himself that bought them; whose*
 2 Tim. ii. *word will eat as doth a canker; and if*
 17. *they are not timely, severely, and effectually prevented, quell'd and even*
 Gal v. 12 *cut off, they will bring in upon our whole Church and Kingdom, as well as*
 2 Pet. ii. 1. *upon themselves, a swift destruction.*

'Tis against these wicked men our Good Government has appear'd with so very eminent and distinguishing a zeal, which is its Honour; and 'tis against these that I have intended my present discourses; which are in themselves indeed, for the most part, of a more wide and general nature: But if I find any
ground

ground of encouragement to hope, I may do GOD and his Church more service by it, I shall go on, and come down from this more general, more abstracted, and less useful way, to a plain and particular examination and answer of some of their main pretences, with the closest arguments and reasonings I can. And, through GOD's grace and heavenly assistance, I hope I shall not be found quite unequal to our adversaries, or to so well design'd a task, having made the Holy Scriptures, those Lively Oracles of Divine Truth, my chief and constant study and delight throughout my life.

I know that here good men will easily excuse me for speaking thus of my self, on this occasion; and some others surely cannot blame me for it, in thinking me vain for doing so, and for accounting and owning that as my chiefest praise and excellence, if I have any, which, amongst themselves, is now rather reputed a reproach and imperfection in this unhappy and deluded age.

But let me be allow'd in this place to speak with the great Apostle on this sacred Subject ; That I am not at all
 Rom. i. 16. *afraid, or aham'd of the Gospel of*
 CHRIST, for it is the power of GOD
 unto Salvation, that any man *in this re-*
spect should make my glorying void.

1 Cor. ix. *Yea, that I count all things but loss*

15.
 Phil. iii. 8. *for the excellency of the knowledge of*

CHRIST JESUS my LORD. This *in-*
deed is the great business of a Clergy-
man ; this is his duty, and this his
glory. This will be his truest orna-
ment and honour for ever ; and will
surely set him, and always keep him
above contempt, and that especially,
which is the greatest of all, for insuffi-
ciency in his own profession. To this
purpose, what a glorious, admirable,
lovely, and desirable character is that
given of the Learned Apollos by St.
Luke himself, a Scholar and a Physician

Coloff. iv. *too, that he was an eloquent man, and*

14.
 Acts xviii. *mighty in the Scriptures.*

24.

And, truly, without this, whatever
parts or acquisitions, learning or know-
ledge

*ledge a Clergyman, especially, nay, any man indeed possesses, whether real, or imaginary, how specious, or how magnified soever, 'tis all meer froth, thin wind, and hollow vanity: 'Tis * fume, 'tis emptiness, 'tis fond impertinence; fit only to puff a man up, when it cannot edify him, and to make him lift up¹ Cor.viii. himself, and rise in his own conceit above his brethren, when he really sinks below them. And after all, will leave him at a loss, unskill'd, and unprepar'd in things of much higher moment and consequence, and that most nearly concern him, even those of an infinite and eternal interest.*

But this most truly divine, excellent, and useful knowledge will adorn, will perfect, will beautify, will save him. For this, I think, I have very clear and express, because Divine authority, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salva-

* Milton's Par. L. B. viii.

tion, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS: *For All Scripture is given by Inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works; if we will take GOD's own word for it deliver'd from the pen of his own favourite Apostle; and if we will not, why do we then take the Holy Scriptures into our mouths at all? or to what purpose is it, that we at all write or speak about them?*

But I hope, at least, all persons of our own sacred Order have entertain'd a far higher opinion, esteem, and affection for GOD's Holy Word, and reveal'd Will, and Law, as I am sure they always ought to have done; and that they will maintain and stand by the divine and awful authority, and most frequent use of it, against all objections, how specious, or how plausible soever; lest, by giving up, or any way slurring the sacred and venerable
reputa-

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reputation of that most Holy Book, by seeming to slight it, and lay it by, our selves, we give a sad offensive occasion to the enemies of all religion and truth to blaspheme, and to do disgrace and dishonour to our Holy Christian Faith it self; against whom our Government has so very well, and so lately acted, and I my self, I am afraid, have been all this while so vainly pleading.

But if I do so any more hereafter, I shall, by the way too, sometimes endeavour to chastise a little further the prophane, impious, and insolent taunts, and scoffs of these ungodly sinners against their own souls, with all the sharpness and severity I am able; and I am sure they very well deserve it. For this very way both of writing and speaking, on such occasions, I have, as it appears in these papers of mine, allow'd and justified to others; and that is one sign and argument, I hope, I don't entirely disallow it in my self. It is indeed very often no more than useful, and
even

Jude xv.
Numb.
xvi. 38.

even sometimes necessary, where and when corruption so much abounds, to Cut and Lance a little, to give some vent and evacuation to the bad humours, that the sounder parts be not infected. 'Tis sometimes expedient as well as lawful to answer fools according to their folly, lest they be wise in their own conceit; that they may learn to be a little more modest at least, if they will not, or cannot be inform'd; not for want of a capacity always, but through a strange Spirit of perverseness, error, and obstinacy that is in them, that has possessed them, and will not be cast out.

1 Cor. vi.
12.
Prov.
xxvi. 5.

This present mean performance of mine in behalf of our own most Holy Christian Faith, and against such vile mens principles and practices, such as it is, I desire the world to accept. I wish it had been much better for the great subject's sake, which I have here endeavour'd to handle, and more according to a present * very pious and

* The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London's
PASTORAL LETTER.

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learned Prelate's both great and good example : For which the world in general is so highly oblig'd to his Lordship ; and amongst the rest I take this opportunity, in particular, to express my own acknowledgments.

S E R-

S E R M O N I.

P R E A C H ' D

Before the UNIVERSITY of
O X F O R D at St. Mary's
Church, on *Sunday April 13,*
1729; and afterwards at the
T E M P L E, *London, on Sunday*
June the 15th.

H E B. X. 23.

*Let us hold fast the profession of our
Faith without wavering.*

IT was the known design of this Epistle SERM. I.
to the *Hebrews*, to confirm and establish
the first converts from amongst the *Jews*
in the steady adherence to the Faith and
Doctrine of J E S U S C H R I S T, and to encourage
them to maintain it, and hold out, against all
opposition they might meet with from the
world, and from the contradictions of sinners,
that should *beset*, and assault them for it. And
it was no more than necessary for the Apostle
to concern and apply himself to that people
C with

SER. M. I. with a greater care and earnestness in this matter, because of the strong and more plausible prejudices they might possibly be under against the first introduction of this *new Doctrine*, as they then thought it, and their own admission of it, above other men. For the *Jews* with the best reason in the world receiv'd and believ'd their own religion to be of Divine original and authority; and therefore, when they apprehended themselves at any time attempted to be drawn from it to a different persuasion, they would be under more hard and severe reluctances *within* themselves, and would more heartily strive and struggle *without*, before they would give up and surrender all their old Legal pretences and advantages to the faith and obedience of a new religion, *especially* to that of the Doctrine of JESUS CHRIST, against which they had entertain'd so very strong, though most unreasonable aversions. *We know*, say they, *that God spake to Moses; As for this fellow, we know not whence he is*, Joh. ix. 29. And so again we find them pleading with St. Paul, *We desire to hear of thee, what thou thinkest; for as concerning this Sect, we know that 'tis every where spoken against*, Acts xxviii. 22.

AND as these prepossessions in favour of their own religion were apt to bar up all access against the doctrine of Christianity at the first; so when they had once entertain'd it, yet still their old affection and *bankering* after their antient *Mosaic* usages and prerogatives were apt to return upon them, and to give them, every now
and

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3

and then, some secret qualm, distaste, and dis- S E R M. I.
inclination against whatever they had receiv'd
instead of the others, or to the diminution of
their honour; especially when *Tribulation* and
Persecution should arise because of the Word of
Christ, by and by they would be apt to be of-
fended, Matt. xiii. 21. and ready to return
back from it into their former state, where
they might think they were much safer, both
with respect to GOD and man, than under
their present one.

THE Apostle was more especially aware of
this; and to prevent so great an inconvenience,
he sets himself to unravel the whole frame and
texture of the Legal ordinances, by pointing
out the utter weakness and insufficiency of
them, consider'd in themselves, to the true end
and advantage of religion in general; and by
laying open the design'd and direct tendency
and reference they had to a better and more spi-
ritual institution, even that of the *Gospel* of
CHRIST, which they had now embrac'd: And
at the same time by representing, unfolding,
and enforcing, to the utmost advantage, the
great and gracious benefits and blessings they
were at *present* made partakers of, and were
farther intitled to *hereafter* by this their new
profession, above what the retaining of all their
old Legal privileges could have supply'd them
with. From whence, with the truest strength
of reason and force of argument that was possi-
ble, he concludes with this affectionate and en-
dearing advice to them, in his own person as

SERM. I. well as theirs, in the following words of my
 ~~~~~ text, *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith  
 without wavering.*

THESE words I shall consider abstracted from this their particular design and occasion on which they were deliver'd, and which I have already mention'd before you ; and shall treat of them as an admirable, useful and powerful instance of the best advice against the renouncing or deserting the truths of CHRIST in all ages and periods of the Church ; and as more immediately necessary to be consider'd *now*, under these unhappy times of declension from the true Faith of religion, and of the increase and triumph of *Infidelity* at present : and shall in my proceeding on them endeavour these following particulars.

FIRST, to shew that there will temptations and difficulties arise to prove and try the faith of all good men and Christians ; that the malice and policy of hell, and the wickedness of the world will take care and provide for *that* ; and that the wisdom of Almighty GOD, for just and gracious ends of his own providence, will suffer it. So much as this I take to be implied in the Apostle's term ἀκλίνη, without wavering, a word that plainly intimates there would be some attacks and violence us'd against the faith of Christians, if possible, to make it reel and stagger.

AND secondly, I shall consider in as short compass as I can, tho' in a more *general* way, the more immediate objections, and the most forceable



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forceable arguments and perswasives, that have SERM. I. in these *last* and worst *days* been offer'd and made use of to take men off, and remove them from the only true ground of *Christian* Faith and Doctrine into erroneous and dangerous opinions, and to harden evil men themselves in their unbelief.

THIRDLY and lastly, I shall try to represent the great and indispensable obligation that lies upon the *Professors* of our true Religion, to maintain and persevere in the Faith of the Holy Gospel of CHRIST, against all this opposition, all the plausible pretences of the men of *corrupt minds*, that thus pervert or adulterate the true Faith of CHRIST, once for all *deliver'd to the Saints*. *Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering.*

AND here I am to make it appear in the *first* place, that there will temptations and difficulties arise, to prove and try the faith and sincerity of all good men and Christians; that the malice and policy of hell, and the wickedness of the world will take care and provide for *that*; and that the wisdom of GOD, for just and gracious ends of his own providence, will suffer it. This, as I said, I take to be implied in the Apostle's own term ἀκλινῇ, *without wavering*, a word which intimates to us, that there would be some attacks and violence us'd against the faith of Christians, to make it reel and stagger.

How well this observation is prov'd and verified indeed, the first ages of the Church,  
and



SERM. I. and their afflicted persecuted state may sufficiently attest. When the powers of the world,  
 2 Cor. iv. and of the *god of this world*, as that Grand  
 4. *Apostate Angel* is denominated, all combined  
 against the *one only true God, and his Blessed Son*  
 CHRIST JESUS, to root out the memorial of  
 Psal. cix. *them from the earth*; all joining in the desperate  
 15. resolution express'd by the Holy Psalmist,  
 Psal. ii. 3. *Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away*  
*their cords from us.* And when after long  
 Rev. xiv. trials to wear out the faith and *patience of*  
 12. *the Saints*, the secular power it self at last, the  
 2 Cor. x. *strong hold* of Satan before, came in and bow'd  
 4. down it self *at the soles of the feet* of the Church  
 Isaiah lx. of GOD; yet even then, that the cause of  
 14. error and iniquity might not stop here,  
 but go on and prosper, that same evil spirit  
 Acts v. 3. *fill'd the hearts* of some even that profess'd  
 Christianity it self to pollute the Holy Faith;  
 Acts xx. and amongst themselves were men to arise *speaking*  
 30. *perverse things to draw away disciples after*  
*them.* And of this those early and pernicious  
 heresies, that sprung up in the first ages of  
 Christianity, afford us too *clear and bad* an evidence.  
 And \* one of them more especially,  
 when the whole *field* of CHRIST'S Church  
 Matt. xiii. seem'd over-grown with the *enemies tares*; so  
 25. that there was hardly a man left to bring in his  
 complaint of the general corruption.

OF this the *Spirit of Prophecy* that was in the Holy Apostles, and first inspir'd Christians

\* Arianism.

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had spoken long before, and represented it not S E R M. I. only as a matter of certain *future event*, but even of great *necessity* and use, for reasons of advantage to the Church of G O D it self.

*For there must be also heresies among you, that* 1 Cor. xi. *they which are approv'd may be made manifest* <sup>19.</sup>

*among you*, says St. Paul. As if *darkness* it self, in the designation of the all-wise G O D, was to serve for the increase and illustration of *the light* of his Holy truth, and for his great- 2 Cor. iv. er glory, *who bringeth light out of darkness*, <sup>6.</sup>

and in *whom is no darkness at all*. But not so 1 Joh. i. 5. is the condition of men, even of all them that are call'd the *children of light*, who often swerve and decline from the light of Truth, when their eyes to all appearance seem most open, but are really *blinded by the god of this world*, 2 Cor. iv. *in that they believe not, lest the light of the glo-* <sup>4.</sup> *rious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

AND there is plain and evident reason to be given for this, for that the *kingdom of darkness* Rev. xvi. could never stand or support it self under the <sup>10.</sup> full sway, and spread, and lustre of Divine light. This the Devil, and his faithful accomplices, the authors and *factors* of infidelity very well knew from the beginning; and that the very frame and constitution of Christianity were laid out in direct opposition and contrariety to their designs, interests and prosperity. And therefore, since they could not entirely extinguish the light of Divine Truth after, that by the grace and goodness of G O D,

it



## *A Preservative against*

**SERMON I.** it was once set up in the world, their business was, as much as they could, to stain and tincture it with false colours, to bring it as near as possible to a complexion with themselves, and their own *dark* designs and purposes.

AND GOD was pleas'd to suffer this, to manifest the goodness and ingenuity of temper in his own faithful servants, who would be true to Him in the midst of a corrupt and degenerate world; and who would be careful to preserve his word *a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their paths, in the midst of blackness, clouds, and thick darkness.* For GOD's glory in his servants never appears more bright and eminent, than when they cleave to him *most nearly*, whilst they are tempted *most importunately* to forsake him; then He appears plainly the great object of their choice and free election, and not of chance, or weakness, or former prejudice. And a steady adherence to the interests of religion *then*, when it is entangled and embarrass'd with the disadvantages of this world, and the reproach of contrary opinions, demonstrates a man a constant lover of the Truth for its own sake and beauty, without the dowry or appendages of prosperous times and fortunes. For these reasons therefore on the side of advantage to the honour of religion it self, and many more, that I have not mention'd here, nor have time to do so *now*, GOD Almighty is often pleas'd to leave the honour and reputation of his Truth in some perplexity, to try whether we will for-

Psal. cxix.

105.

Heb. xii.

18.

Zeph. i.

15.



## Infidelity and Apostacy.

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take it or not, and whether we will endeavour to bring it succour and relief in time of its distress; and if we *cannot*, or *will not* endeavour this, He will arise himself *at last* and assert his own cause, and give it an open and glorious deliverance by the *strength* of his *own* I sai. li. 9. *right hand* and *holy arm* assisting him, to the I sai. lii. 10. shame of all base deserters, and the confusion of them that hate Him.

BESIDES, there is another reason respecting evil men themselves, why GOD suffers the brightness of his Divine *Truth* to be thus *cast* Dan. viii. *down*, and to lie under the dark shades of error for some time; in just judgment on these men for their former iniquities and transgressions, that they themselves may go on, and *stumble, and fall backward, and be broken, and* I sai. viii. *snar'd, and taken; therefore God will give them* 15. *up to strong delusion, that they may believe a* I sa xxviii. *lye, that they all might be damn'd, who believ'd* 13. *not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

For if men will reject and harden themselves against the light of truth, when they might see it, or will only retain it in *unrighteousness* Rom i. *of life*, it is just in GOD to remove it from 18. them, and to give them over to a lost and reprobate Spirit; till, from their *hating the light* Joh. iii. *in this world*, they slide on from one degree of 20. ignorance and error to another, and end their progress at last in *everlasting darkness*; Matt viii. *where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of* 12. *teeth*; in those black and dismal regions, where hope, joy or comfort never come, nor any

D

light

SERM. I. light arrives, but that of *everlasting fire and brimstone*, which serves only to discover sights of *wo*, of infinite intolerable *wo*, anguish, and desolation of Spirit for ever.

THESE are some of those reasons for which GOD often suffers his holy and eternal truth to pass under disadvantages in this present world, for the greater good of his Faithful Servants, for a snare and punishment on evil men; and that, when the truth it self comes out from under a cloud at last, it may shine the more bright and illustrious in the world, and appear the more glorious and *beautiful* for its former Sufferings.

I PASS now Secondly to consider, in as little compass as I can, and in a more general way, some of the more immediate objections, and, what are at present conceiv'd by some the most forcible arguments and persuasions, <sup>2 Tim. iii.</sup> that in these *last and perilous times* have been made use of to take men off, and remove them from the only true ground of Christian faith and doctrine, into erroneous and dangerous opinions, and to harden evil men themselves in their infidelity. And those that I shall mention here are three, in which evil men proceed,

FIRST, By placing the Stress and Test of Religion upon a half bottom, and imperfect ground, and then slyly undermining *that*, to conclude the want of sufficient argument and evidence for the truth of *Religion it self*.

## Infidelity and Apostacy.

II

SECONDLY, By referring us for the truth SERM. I. and proof of religion, and to countenance their own errors, to an insufficient, humane authority, which was never yet, nor ought to be made the rule, measure, and standard of religious truth.

THIRDLY, By turning the serious and weighty truths of religion into a wanton scorn and ridicule, thus to influence the light and foolish minds of men to a contempt, or slight opinion of it. These are some of the chief and choicest *engines* of the Devil's *battery*, that he has employ'd against Christianity of late, in the hands of a *set of men*, who are more forward and prepar'd to promote error and falshood, if possible, than the Grand Father of lies himself, and who stand in very little need of his temptations, to make them equally the *sons of perdition, and children of Hell* Joh. xvii. 12. with himself. 2. Theff. ii. 3.

IN the First place then these men put the Stress and Test of the Christian Religion upon a half bottom and imperfect ground, and then by slyly undermining *that*, they conclude against the sufficient evidence and argument for the truth of Religion it self. This is the politick artifice and wicked cunning of the author of those *rotten grounds and reasons*, that have fill'd the world with such a noisome stench and influence, to the corrupting the principles and manners of men, prepar'd before indeed, and ready for the reception of the worst of errors, and by their own bad temper almost *fit-*

Matth. xxiii. 15.



S E R M. I. *ted for destruction.* By this false and injurious writer we have the truth and evidence of Christianity misrepresented, as leaning only upon Old Testament prophecies, and those prophecies again traduc'd as only typical, allegorical, of dark and uncertain interpretation, and consequently (tho' he dares not expressly draw that conclusion himself, but leaves others to do it for him, and for their *own*, no doubt, most pious use) we have no certain, clear, apparent evidence of the Holy Christian Faith, which we have receiv'd to believe, upon which our everlasting interest depends, by the rules of which we are bound to live, and for attestation to which, if need be, we ought to die. This is the fine conclusion that rises upon this Gentleman's incompleat, defective and false foundation! So that, if we will only believe this modest man, he himself, and two or three more very much like him, are the only wise men in the world, or that have been so for these 1700 years, and all the rest of the Christian world, the whole body of Professors, ever since the first foundation of Christianity, have been only one great multitude, assembly, and collection of fools, and the author of our Religion it self a very fly, or filly impostor! And is such doctrine as this to be endur'd in a Christian Kingdom? Nay, further, is it to be courted, to be admir'd, to be greedily suck'd in, as a matter of comfort, of advantage, of learning, of high improvement?

Jer. v. 9. *Shall not God visit for such things as these?*  
and

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and shall not his soul be aveng'd on such a nation as this? But let this man know, and all that like him, or are like him, learn, that there are many prophecies of Holy Scripture clear and exprefs predictions of our Blessed LORD, not to be eluded by his sinful sophistry, as may in proper time very easily be shewn. That the whole frame of the Jewish Ecclesiastical Polity, the Types, and Figures, and Representations of the Law are plainly laid out, contriv'd and directed on purpose to point out to us the sublime and heavenly events and mysteries of the Gospel. That GOD surely must be allow'd able to speak by *real and substantial* signs, as well as words; and that He has plainly told us, in many instances his own meaning, and given us a plain Clue and Key to guide us, and let us in to the true knowledge and apprehension of the rest. So that the *Spirit of prophecy is a sure Spirit*, and, if believ'd, cannot mislead us. SERM. I.  
Rev. xix.  
10.  
2 Pet. i.  
19.

HOWEVER, does the truth of Christianity rest only upon Prophecies, be they what they will? Does not our Blessed LORD himself, the Founder of our Holy Faith, build the main Evidence and Conviction of it upon his own most mighty and wonderful works, such as no man ever did before him? John the Baptist, we know, was greater than all the Prophets; yet our LORD expressly tells us, That he *had greater witness than even that of John*; Matt. xi. *for the works, says he, which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear*

SERM. I. *bear witness of me that the Father hath sent*  
 ~~~~~  
 Joh. v. 36. *me. Again, The works that I do in my Father's*
 — x. 25. *name, they bear witness of me. Nay, does not*

our LORD plainly suppose and leave the Jews themselves in a great measure without, and free from the obligation of believing him, if it had not been for the mighty unparallel'd signs and miracles He wrought amongst them?

Joh. xv. *If I had not done among them the works which*
 24. *none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and my Father. 'Tis plain therefore by our SAVIOUR's own words, that He lays the main and chief stress for the truth and authority both of his person and religion upon his works of miracles. How comes then this unworthy Prevaricator to tell us, that Christianity leans chiefly, or only upon Prophecies?*

WELL, but a good Friend of his will allow us more, I hope, and deal a little more liberally with us, that the belief of Christianity shall in some sort rest likewise upon miracles! But how so? why upon miracles in such a sense as he is pleas'd to interpret and understand them; not altogether upon matters of fact neither, that is, outward works, as we believe, above the power of nature; nor indeed upon *them* at all, when he thinks fit to ridicule and reject them as absurd and idle tales, and to toss them up into his own vain, empty, phantastick, airy, whimsical speculations.

BUT

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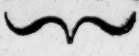
17

BUT to come nearer, and to deal a little SER. M. I. more closely with this man; Did our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, the SON of GOD, come into the world to settle a new and perfect religion in it, or did he not? That he did, this man does not yet deny, only we are not at present agreed what that religion was: And if he did come upon that design, what is then that religion that he has settled, but what we find contain'd in the Holy Gospel? And if He settled *that*, how did He do it *principally* and *chiefly*, but by his works? How then come those great, wise, and excellent works to be thus traduc'd, run down and blasphem'd, as foolish and absurd, by this impious pen? But if our LORD did not settle the very religion we have in the Gospel, he settled none at all, for ought we find, or that yet appears in the world hitherto. For that *same* strange Mystical, Enigmatical, Quakerish, Symbolical, Emblematical Religion, to which this foolish man refers all the miracles recorded in the Gospel, is yet in the *Clouds*; 'tis not yet come down to us, and no-body can ever tell when we shall have it, or how we shall come by it, or what it is, or to what end and purpose. So that, by denying to our LORD's miracles the sufficient proof of the doctrine we know he has deliver'd in the Gospel, this idle person makes him come into the world in vain, and upon no more worthy an errand, than an old, wild, half-witted, crack-brain'd, enthusiastical Philosopher

SERM. I. pher might as well have perform'd as the
 Mark xiv. Eternal Son of the Blessed GOD himself, the
 61. wisdom and glory of his Almighty FATHER.
 Rom. i. But to proceed a little further with this man;
 24. if, as he pretends, our SAVIOUR CHRIST
 came to establish such a religion as he would
 have, I suppose however *that* must be a *wise*
 religion *at least*, and how does he make him
 go about to establish *that*? Why, * by *foolish*,
absurd, improbable, incredible miracles, as this
 man tells us expressly himself; and does he
 think such a Person as he here represents our
 LORD, and such means as these fit to give
 credit to, or to establish any religion?

So that in short, these two worthy repre-
 senters of Christianity, however they seem to
 take a different way, they exactly meet and
 agree in the same end and purpose; which
 is the real destruction of Christianity it self.
 The former of them is against all types, pro-
 phecies, mysteries being good for any thing;
 the latter is for nothing else; so that one
 beheads the Prophets of GOD, the other the
 Apostles and Evangelists of CHRIST; and
 between them both, they are for making as
 quick a dispatch of all that the wise and
 honest men in the world call and think the
 true religion as possible: For while they both
 build such a wild fabrick of their own, and
 call it Christianity, upon such a bottom as
 they think fit, by moving one Critical corner-

* In his First discourse of the miracles of our
 SAVIOUR, p. 4.

stone of this their own imaginary Structure, S E R M. I.
 which they themselves have laid before, as 
 the *only* foundation of Christian truth, they
 have it in their power, they know, whenever
 they think fit, to let it all sink and tumble
 to the ground at once. I pray G O D deliver
 us from all such *wise Master-builders* as these I Cor. iii.
 men are, and from all *others* that shall go ^{10.}
 about to lay any other foundation than that is I Cor. iii.
 laid, J E S U S C H R I S T the Righteous! ^{11.}

AGAIN, Secondly, These men endeavour
 to ensnare and divert us from the truths of
 religion, by referring us for the strength and
 proof of it, and to countenance their own er-
 rors, to an insufficient, humane Authority,
 which never was yet, nor ever ought to be
 made or esteem'd the just rule, measure, or
 standard of Religious Truth. Thus these so-
 phistical Gentlemen, finding the Holy Scrip-
 tures point blank against them, very kindly
 and cunningly send us to the *Fathers* for the
 main proof and support of our religion; and
 dare appeal to their authority for their own
 blots and blemishes too. Now let these same
 Arch Politicians hear and understand *once* for
all, that tho' we desire to be, and are found
 very dutiful Sons to the great Fathers of the
 Christian Church, yet we have a Father in hea-
 ven above them all, and if 'twas possible that the
 whole body of the Fathers together, nay, all
 the *Angels in Heaven* themselves, should preach any Gal. i. 8.
 other Gospel than that we have received, let
 them be accurs'd. For 'tis impossible that ei-

E

ther

SERM. I. *ther Fathers or Angels should teach a doctrine more worthy of Almighty GOD, or establish'd upon better grounds and authority than what our LORD JESUS CHRIST has left to his Holy Church in his everlasting Gospel. And if any man preach or write contrary to this, he is so far from being a Father, that he is a bastard Son, fit only to be rejected by him who is the one and only Father of our Faith and Spirits.*

Rev. xiv. 6.
Heb. xii. 9.

BUT these men do basely and villanously, if they don't do it ignorantly, abuse and asperse the good Fathers of the Christian Church. They leave out all the good things, and turn them over in hast, only to find *flaws*; and it may be very much suspected, without very well understanding the very language in which they are written; or if they do happen to understand that, they can the more easily corrupt it, and by putting a downright *Position* instead of a *Supposition*, or by curtailing a sentence, or misrepresenting an argument, or breaking the connection, and by many other ways, methods, and artifices of iniquity, * they make what sense of a Father they think fit, what is most agreeable to their own humour or design, and will best gratify their own most absurd nonsensical opinions.

* For a proof of the falsifications of these men, See the Lord Bishop of London's *Pastoral Letter*, where he speaks in defence of *Origen*: And likewise two papers lately publish'd, entitled, *Our SAVIOUR'S Miracles vindicated*.

BUT

BUT if there should happen to be, amongst SERM. I.
 ten thousand admirable truths and authorities, a
 mistake or two in a Father, who perhaps was
 addicted to a particular sect of *Philosophy*,
 and wrote sometimes after *that*, or who had
 infirmities, we are sure, like other men, and
 committed no more faults than are found in the
 best of humane writings, I am certain, not
 the thousandth part so many as are found
 almost in one of their own fond, idle, foolish
 books; yet these men should, surely, rather
 have dutifully gone *backward* as the *Good old*
Patriarchs did, and have cover'd the *naked-*
ness of their Fathers, for their goodness sake, Gen. ix.
 and not have expos'd their weakneses and in-
 firmities to the scoffs and insults of ungodly
 men, and the honour of religion it self to-
 gether with them. This I speak only by way
 of supposition, if there *were* such faults to
 be found in some of the Fathers, as these men
 are willing it should be thought there *are*;
 but whether there be or not, it is impossible
 for a man to determine upon the spot always,
 without consulting them on purpose, and, I
 am sure, we have no great reason to take
 these mens words for it, that there are such,
 or for any thing else.

BUT after all, are the Fathers the proper
 Foundation or Rule of our Christian faith and
 doctrine? * They themselves, I think, are to

E 2

be

* And so they thought too. So St. *Augustine* to
Petilian the Donatist, Ne inquit audiantur inter nos hæc
 verba,

SERM. I. be rul'd by the word of GOD, and if they
 go from it, or besides it, are they not justly
 blam'd? If they speak *according to this word*,
 and nothing in discord or dissonance from it,
 let them be justly reverenc'd, and we honour
 them: But otherwise, *The Fathers, where are*
 Zech. i. 5. *they?* or their writings, *do they live for ever?*
 1 Pet. i. *But the word of GOD, we are sure, liveth and*
 23, 25. *abideth for ever; And this is the word which by*
 Isai. viii. *the Gospel is preach'd unto you. To the Law*
 20. *then and to the testimony, my brethren, if they*
speak not according to thy word, it is because
 Matth. *there is no light in them. Call no man Father*
 xxiii. 9. *upon earth, says our Blessed Saviour in this*
sense, for one is your Father which is in heaven;
that is, receive not the dictates or authority
of any man, or of any body of men, how
venerable soever, as the final rule and deter-
mination of your religious faith and obedience;
for GOD only infallible, and his holy word
demand that from you.

GOD forbid, I should here be understood
 to pass any slight or slur upon the persons or

verba, ego dico, aut tu dicis, sic potius dicamus, hæc
 dicit Dominus. De unitat. Eccles. cap. iii. So likewise
 St. Hierom, Omnia, inquit, ea quæ absque testimonio
 Scriptorum, quasi tradita ab Apostolis afferuntur, per-
 cutiuntur gladio Dei. In primum. cap. Aggei. So in
 like manner St. Ambrose to Gratian the Emperour, In-
 terrogentur, inquit, Scripturæ, interrogentur Apostoli,
 interrogentur Prophetæ, interrogetur Christus, with
 many more I could produce to this purpose; but too
 many citations, I think, are more a proof of a man's
 own impertinence, than of any thing else.

writings

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writings of those admirable, learned, eloquent, SERM. I.
but above all, most pious, and faithful men,
the Antient Holy Fathers of the Christian
Church. From whence, next to the sacred
fountains of Scripture it self, there is more
sound Divinity, more true Learning, more im-
proving Knowledge to be drawn, than from
ten thousand volumes of such novel doctrine
as we have seen of late. And, amongst other
reasons of the decay of Christian knowledge
and piety in the world, I verily believe 'tis
not the least that those excellent writings, that
breath forth such a sincere and fervent spirit of
holiness, are so much neglected; nor will ever
that noble spirit of piety return again, 'till the
Holy Fathers are more in our hands and hearts,
as well as in our studies. What I have here
said, that can any way sound or be drawn to
their prejudice, I have spoken only *compara-*
tively, with respect to the word of GOD him-
self; and the Fathers themselves would be far
from being asham'd at it, or angry with me for
it, if they themselves could hear me this day
before you. 'Twas *their* honour and glory to
submit to GOD's Holy word and revelation,
and to study it always, to express it in their
excellent works and sermons, and to practise
it continually in their lives and actions. But
these evil men do neither, and while they cite
those good mens sentences, if ever at any
time they do *really* cite them, they will not
follow them in their repentance, humility, and
submission to the will and word of GOD.
The

SERM. I. The *praise* of the *Fathers* indeed, and their authority is much in their *mouths*, but *as far from their hearts*, as GOD and Truth themselves are, and we are very much afraid will ever continue to be.

THE third and last way and method by which these sinful men endeavour to supplant and undermine the honour and credit of religion, is by turning the serious and weighty truths of it into a wanton scorn and ridicule, thus to influence the light and foolish minds of ill-dispos'd and inconsiderate persons to a contempt and slight opinion of it. But if the want of sense and reason at any time, or in these men more especially, that practise in this way, be a reason and argument against religion, then this is one. If the real and eternal being, reasons, and relations of things must be all cancell'd, routed, and undone by mere idle resemblances, and trifling similitudes, by giddy freaks and fancies, then *down* with all sober reason, sense and truth at once, and set up wit, gay, grinning, frolick wit, adorn'd in all its various plumes, humours, and gaudy trimmings in the throne of government; and see what *wise wild* work it will produce in the affairs of mankind! how much more then, in the most serious and important things of GOD! For is there any thing so truly weighty, so very momentous, of ever so great influence and concern to the honour of GOD or the happiness of men, which a loose, scurrilous mimick, insignificant, atheistical, sau-

cy wit cannot abuse, and paint, and represent, ^{SERM. I.}
under its own aukward features, and most
contemptible buffoonry; its mad and frantick
colours and postures? And is this an argument
to a wise man, or his business, to stand, and
look, and laugh at, and be pleas'd with the
sport of fools? The Primitive *fool said in his* ^{Psal. xiv.}
heart there was no God, and his true descen-
dents and posterity laugh, and tell us with
their mouths there is no religion (for if no
Christianity, as bad as none I think) against
all the sense, reason, authority, and consent
of the best part of mankind to the contrary.
And if these wild witty fools must prevail
and govern the world, 'tis high time surely
for men of sense and wisdom to go out of
it, or at least to retire from it.

IF these bright men indeed could alter
the nature of things with the odd posture
of their faces, and with the bare twist and
contraction of their muscles, could turn and
screw off truth it self from its eternal basis,
they might then *well laugh*, and all wise and
good men would heartily be *sorry*: But the
nature and truth of things, as it happens, is as
sullen and obstinate as these vain men are mer-
ry, and will no more bend to their idle hu-
mours and foolish fancies, than their short
and shallow understandings are able to reach
and fathom *that*. The power of laughter in
Philosophy, we know, has always been look'd
upon as the note and mark of reason; but
in these light, trifling, flashy whiflers, the
practice

SERM. I. practice of it is an argument only, and an evidence of their want of *common sense*. And how comes it thus to be made the grand *Criterion* of the greatest fools? because they pervert and draw it off from the true native innocent chearful use and intention of it to the abuse of all that is wise, worthy, excellent and useful in the world.

AND if it be not a sign of sense or wisdom in the men that use it thus, against reason and religion, I am sure 'tis much less an argument, or the result of any real peace, or joy, calm, or complacence of mind within these men themselves. In the midst of all this *mirth* and loud *laughter* against serious things, there is a secret damp, *sorrow* and *heaviness* within their breasts, a *dryness*, distrust, and disquietude of spirit, of a mind not satisfied with its own resolutions and proceedings, and infinitely jealous and fearful of the event. *There is no peace saith my God to the wicked: The wicked are like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* Like a troubled sea, indeed, like raging waves of the sea, as the Apostle tells us, *foaming out their own shame; continually restless and rowling in the dirt and mire of their own pollutions.* Such a mirth as this, the Devil himself may, for ought we know, be capable of (as Death his first-born *incestuous* son is represented by an excellent poet of our own) and *grin horrible a ghastly smile*, and flouting sneer against GOD and all goodness in the very gloom of hell itself, in the midst of torments:

Prov. xiv.
13.

Matth. xii.
43.

Isai. lvii.
20, 21.

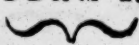
Jude 13.

2 Pet. ii.
22.

Milton's
Parad.
Lost, B. ii.

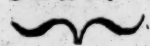
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torments; while in the mean time he feels SERM I.
within him the furious lashes of his own mind 
correcting him, and the strong and severe hand Jer. ii. 19.
of Almighty justice on him, in his punishment
for his foul *revolt*. So these same gay, merry,
frolick, gamesome sinners have their dark and
gloomy returns upon them, their black and
hideous reflections in their souls, after, amidst,
and under all their jollity; being incessantly
rack'd with wild hurrying and tormenting
passions, with gnawing envy, burning revenge,
and rancorous spleen and spight against all that
is more wise, excellent and happy than them-
selves; which is almost every thing that has
any sense and perception in the world.

ONE famous instance we have of this in
the man I hinted at before, set up *now* by the
strict wisdom and justice of our Law, as the
very mark of impiety it self; can I say ridicu-
lous impiety? no; far from it; but of the
most horrid, black, diabolical blasphemy, the
blasphemy of Hell, and the Ludicrous sport
and diversion, if they have any, of *damn'd*
Devils themselves. And how then can such a
foul dishonour of GOD, and of his Blessed
SON CHRIST JESUS, be the object of any
laughter or mirth to men? For next to the
exceeding great, and I am afraid, *unpardonable* 1 Joh. v.
sin of being guilty of writing those horrid Pa-
pers, I can think of none greater, than *that*
of reading them with pleasure, and laughing at
them with complacence.

SERM. I.



SEE how this abominable man endeavours to expose, to run down, to scoff and scorn every thing he likes not, which is all that is good and worthy in the universe! Does any thing sacred, more especially, escape his prophane, most black, and dirty pen? With what terrible irreverence, how very impiously, how intolerably, how much worse than any language is able to express, and would even tremble to represent, does he treat the Divine *Author* and *Founder of our Faith* himself, the LORD of Glory! How does *he call those of his household Beelzebub*, together with their *Blessed Master*! How does he pursue the whole Sacred order of the Priesthood appointed by GOD himself, and the *Angels of the Church* especially, with the bitterest and most impudent revilings! with the utmost flouts and scorn imaginable! whereas the Great *Arch-Angel Michael*, when disputing with the *Devil* about the body of *Moses*, durst not bring, even against the *Devil* himself, a railing accusation! much less such a one as this man brings against these religious Fathers of the Church of GOD. For those most mild, gracious, and blessed Spirits, the Holy Angels of GOD in Heaven are always ready and prepar'd to fulfil acts of grace and love, of good will, kindness and favour to others; in resemblance of their great and *Blessed Father*, the original pattern of all goodness, whose face they always behold in bliss, and whose most perfect * exam-

Matth.

xviii. 10.

* Hooker's Eccles. Polity, Lib. I. Sect. 4.

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ple they for ever copy after and endeavour to S E R M. I. imitate. But at injury, railing, and reviling, we may believe those glorious Spirits have no skill, talent, nor faculty at all. That is properly the Devil's office, province, and employment; *they* never invade it, but leave it entirely to him, without grudge or envy. But this man, his *perfect Disciple, is as his Master*, he Luke vi. has learnt the whole mystery of his trade and 40. employment from him; from his *black Master*, Joh. viii. and *Father the Devil*; and *the works of his Father he will do*, till he is restrain'd! 44.

YET these truly humble, pious, and learned Fathers of our Church, in a true Christian Spirit of *meekness, of wisdom*, which this James iii. man knows nothing of, answer not this undutiful reviler (his reproaches I mean, for reasons he has none) *as King Solomon well advises* Prov. *in his case*; and as another great and good xxvii. 4. King, *Hezekiah*, after him, *commanded* in the instance of *Railing Rabshakeh*; and as a much I sa. xxxvi. greater than either of them, our LORD JESUS 21. CHRIST himself did always practise; who reply'd to the reasons of his enemies what was just and true, but to their abuses and reproaches, except meek patience and forbearance, nothing.

* BUT let this *bold, bad man go and learn*, if he is yet able to understand, *what this meaneth*; Psal. liii.

* Spencer's Fairy Queen, *speaking of old Archimago*. 4.
And cursed heaven, and spoke reproachful shame
Of Highest GOD, the LORD of life and light,
A bold, bad man! ——— *Book I. Cant. 1. 37.*

F 2

that

SERM. I. that these good, wise, and worthy Fathers of
 our Church are so well employ'd in the care
 1 Tim. iii. 15. of the *house of the living GOD, the Church of*
 CHRIST, whom he blasphemes, and in all o-
 ther works of piety and goodness; that they
 have no time, leisure, nor inclination to reply
 to the virulent and empty sauciness of *fools*,
 unless it be in the way the spirit of wisdom
 and of GOD himself prescribes, and their
 own duty requires of them, *A whip for the*
 Prov. xxvi. 3. *horse, and a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the*
fool's back. For if these sinners will be such
 fools, as they take care to approve themselves
 to all men of sense and reason in the world, so
 much like to the horse and mule that have no un-
 derstanding, they must undergo the same cor-
 rection and restraint with them, I think, and
 Psal. xxxii. 9. *have their mouths held with bit and birdle as*
they have, lest they fall upon us, or upon some-
thing better than our selves: Not being ca-
 pable of true reason and understanding, nor
 2 Tim iii. 7. *ever able through the ignorance and blindness that*
is in them, to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 Prov. x. 13. For wisdom and knowledge are for men of under-
 — xviii. 2. standing, but a fool to the correction of the stocks,
 — vii. 22. says Solomon. And surely these men are the
 greatest, worst, and most unaccountable sort
 of fools in the whole world! for there is no
 — xxi. 30. wit, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, nor understand-
 Joh. xvii. 3. ing, nor counsel against the LORD, the only
 true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom he
 has sent. In the knowledge and love of whom
 Ezek. xvi. consists eternal life. But wo, wo to these
 23. wicked

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wicked men, that they abuse religion, themselves, and all the world! wo be to them *that* thus *laugh now, for they shall mourn and weep* Luke vi. 25. *for ever!*

I COME now to the Third and Last particular I propos'd, which was to represent the great and indispensable obligation that lies upon the professors of our Holy religion, to maintain and persevere in the faith of the Gospel, against all the opposition, all the plausible pretences and practices of the men of corrupt minds, that thus pervert or adulterate the *Faith of CHRIST once for all deliver'd to the Saints.* Let us hold fast the profession of our *Faith without wavering.* If ever there was reason for any thing, there is certainly for this; both Divine and Humane Authority oblige us to it, and our own highest interest and happiness direct us *to it.* We have all the evidence for the Truth and Divinity of our Holy religion, that we could possibly have, supposing it to be true; and we are most unreasonable, and act quite beside the way and manner of men, if we demand or desire more. For what is it, wherein GOD has fail'd us? or has he not given sufficient evidence to the word of his Holy Truth and Doctrine? He made *bare the Arm of his Almighty power* for our sakes, Isa. lii. 10. *chang'd, controll'd, surpass'd the standing laws of nature, in those mighty signs and wonders that he wrought in confirmation of it; and made heaven, and earth, and hell it self* all Matth. iii. *bear witness to the Truth and Divinity of his* ^{17.} Mark i.

H O L Y 24.

SER. M. I. HOLY SON, the Great Author and Finisher of
 Heb. xii. *our Faith.* All Histories are full of this, and
 2. the whole world a volume in which 'tis writ-
 Joh. xxi. ten in the largest characters. *The sound of the*
 25. *Gospel went out throughout all lands,* and its
 Rom. x. words to the ends of the world; even the Ta-
 18. *bernacle of the Sun it self,* when more than a
 4. *cloud of darkness rested on it* at the Death of
 Numb. x. the SON of GOD, bore witness to the truth
 12. of this. All nature proclaim'd his Divine per-
 son and authority, own'd and submitted to his
 power, and requir'd obedience to his laws.
 And shall man, vain man, the folly, and weak-
 ness, and wickedness of frail humane nature,
 oppose this? and shall we give up our reason
 and conscience, the Dignity and Excellency
 of our nature, and our Holy faith it self, the
 ornament of our present life, and the great
 pledge and security of our future and eternal
 happiness, to the impudence, impertinence, and
 impiety of a few rash, headlong, presumptuous,
 scoffing Sinners? Where is then the Spirit of a
 man in us, or the generous and noble Genius of
 a Christian? If all that GOD has done for us,
 cannot retain us to him, it is impossible for
 Salvation it self to save us. Let not then the
 vain wiles and sophistry, the foolish confidence
 and presumption, the pride, impudence, or ig-
 norance of evil men, the common ill vogue,
 opinions, or practice of a wicked world ever
 prevail upon us to forsake him who died for
 us, who is thereby become the author of life
 1 Tim. i. to us, the *foundation of all our hopes,* our pre-
 1. sent

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sent shield and defence, and our exceeding great SERM. I.
reward. Let not the examples or influence Pfal.
of evil men, how great, how many, how pow- xxviii. 7.
erful, how celebrated soever, mislead us from Gen. xv.
the truth, that we should forsake our GOD, ^{1.}
the rock of our Salvation, the Great spring and Pfal. lxii.
fountain of living waters. Hath a nation chang'd ^{2.}
their gods, which yet are no gods? says the Numb.
eloquent and holy Prophet well: And shall xx. 8.
we change our Glory for the image and simili- Jer. ii. 11.
tude of Calves, for the senseless and shallow ^{13.}
remonstrances, the stupid inferences and col- Pfal. cvi.
lections of a set of benighted, ignorant, blinded, ^{20.}
and blundering fools? If we do so, we deserve Joh. xi.
the fate of those very brutes themselves that ^{10.}
perish, that are made to be taken and destroy'd, Eph. iv.
and their character too, which is this, to be ^{18.}
without reason, or reflection, thought, or ap- Pfal. xlix.
prehension. ^{12.} 2 Pet. ii.

I COULD easily carry on this Subject to a much greater length, in a more distinct, close and argumentative way; but I have already quite tir'd both your patience and my self, and shall therefore leave the rest to be pursued by your own much wiser, and more just reflections.

AND now, my dearly beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable from the Faith and ~~Job i. 1~~
Hope of the Gospel of CHRIST, even so stand ^{1 Cor. xv.}
fast in the LORD, my dearly beloved. And ^{58.} Coloss. i.
may the GOD of all Grace and Goodness, and ^{23.}
the word of his power preserve us all from the Acts xx.
snares, errors, and deceits of a corrupt and ^{32.} Heb. i. 3.

S E R M. I. foolish world ; from the wanderings and wa-
 verings of *absurd* and *unreasonable men*, desti-
 tute of *Truth*, for all men have not the Faith;
 and may he build us up, and establish us in
 every good thought, word and work, and give
 us an inheritance among all them that are sancti-
 fied by Faith in our LORD JESUS CHRIST,
 the SON of GOD, through the powerful opera-
 tion of the *Holy Spirit of Grace*: To whom
 with the Blessed and Eternal *Father*, Lord of
 Heaven and Earth, be always ascrib'd, and for
 ever due, all *Blessing*, and *Glory*, and *Wisdom*,
 and *Thanksgiving*, and *Honour* and *Might*,
 throughout all ages, world without end. *Amen.*

S E R M O N II.
A
P R E S E R V A T I V E
Against the growing
Infidelity and Apostacy
O F T H E
P R E S E N T A G E, &c.

S E R M O N II.

P R E A C H ' D

Before the U N I V E R S I T Y,
1726 ; and afterwards at the
T E M P L E, *London*, on *Sun-*
day, *June 22. 1729.*

St. J U D E ' s Epistle, ver. 3.

— *That ye should earnestly contend
for the Faith, which was once de-*
liver'd to the Saints.

THAT an advice and exhortation SERM. II.
of this nature should have been
thought necessary in the very first and
purest age of Christianity, and *that*
from no less than the pen of an *Apostle*, seems
a matter of very great surprize, and could hard-
ly find room and entertainment in our Faith.
But yet such indeed was the case and condi-
tion even of those early times, and so the very
matter stood in fact it self. And though the
doctrines of our holy Religion were just then

SERM. II. newly deliver'd pure and uncorrupt from the
 Heb. xii. 2. mouth of the Divine *Author of our faith* him-
 Luke i. 2. self; though the *eye-witnesses of the Word*, and
 2 Pet. i. 16. Divinity of the Christian Religion, almost all
 Heb. vi. 5. of them, were still alive, and the powers of
 the world to come, were so frequently exerted
 in plain, visible, and miraculous effects, to
 attest the same; yet howsoever it came about,
 through the industry of the Devil, and the
 corruptions of men, the truths of GOD were
 no sooner enter'd upon the world, than they
 were attempted by the wiles of error, the in-
 sinuations of false and dangerous opinions.

THIS reason the Apostle gives, immediate-
 ly after my text, of his so very careful and se-
 rious application to the Church of GOD at that
 time, because of the sly and wicked practices
 of evil men, that even *then* endeavoured to
 undermine the Gospel of CHRIST, in its
 first, most necessary, and fundamental articles;
 contradicting and denying the Divinity of its
 Author, and perverting its pure and heavenly
 doctrines, in order to their own base and un-
 righteous purposes, and to favour and coun-
 tenance their own pollutions. *Beloved*, says
 the Apostle, *when I gave all diligence to write*
unto you of the common salvation, it was necessa-
ry for me to write unto you, and exhort you,
that you should earnestly contend for the faith,
which was once deliver'd to the Saints. And
 then follows the reason of this necessity: *For*
there are certain men crept in unawares, who
were before of old ordain'd to this condemnation,
 ungodly

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ungodly men turning the grace of GOD into lasciviousness, and denying the only LORD GOD, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST. This, it seems, was at *that* time a sufficient reason for the Apostle to put the saints and true professors of religion in remembrance of their duty, and to stand upon the defence and maintenance of their common faith. SERM. II.

AND if this was a good reason *then*, I am sure it is so *now*, and for our attending to this excellent advice, deliver'd in my text, with all carefulness and caution, in a corrupt and licentious age, when the very heart and life of Christianity in general are struck at, by the bold and impious errors of men, in plain and direct opposition to GOD's own word, and the most authentick consent of men in the best and purest ages of the Church. This, if any thing, ought to be a motive and powerful engagement on us to *take unto us the whole armour of God*, in the defence of our religion, and in the Apostle's own words and sense, *earnestly to contend for the Faith which was once deliver'd to the Saints.* Ephes. vi. 13.

FROM these words of the Apostle therefore, I shall make it my present business to consider these three things;

FIRST, That there is a certain form and rule of faith, in a fix'd and determin'd sense, as far as GOD has thought fit to reveal it, deliver'd to the Church of GOD, obliging and requiring our firm assent to it, which is here
stil'd

SERM. II. stil'd the faith that was *once* deliver'd to the
 Saints.

SECONDLY, That this form and rule of Faith was once *for all*, deliver'd to the Church by CHRIST and his Apostles, for that is the proper notation of the *Greek* word ἀπαξ, and is to be continued down to the Church in after ages, without alteration, without addition or diminution.

THIRDLY, With what degrees and measures of zeal and care, and in what instances we are requir'd to defend and maintain this Holy Faith, against all that shall endeavour at any time to corrupt or oppose it: We are to *contend earnestly for the faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints*. These particulars take up, I think, the full scope and intendment of my text, and I shall proceed on them in the order here laid down, by considering

FIRST, That there is a certain form and rule of faith, in a fix'd and determin'd sense, as far as GOD has thought fit to reveal it, deliver'd to the Church of GOD, obliging and requiring our firm assent to it, which is here stil'd *the Faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints*. This St. Paul entitles the *form of sound words*, and charges his disciple Timothy to keep it sacred and inviolate: It being indeed that scheme of divine and heavenly truths, which GOD has made known to the world
 in

2 Tim. i.
 13.

in order to our salvation. 'Tis that great *de-* SERM. II.
positum, committed to the care and keeping
of the Church, which for that reason is stil'd
the *pillar and ground of truth* it self; as it ex- I Tim. iii.
hibits, represents, and holds out to us, and ^{15.}
to the several Members of it, those main
and fundamental doctrines, upon the reception
and belief of which our everlasting happi-
ness depends. And though we perhaps our
selves may not discern the necessary and imme-
diate connection there is between these points
of faith at present, and our life and happi-
ness hereafter, yet GOD who reveal'd them
to us does so; and therefore 'tis at our utmost
peril if we reject or disbelieve them.

FOR 'tis by our holding these essential
doctrines of our faith, that we are united to
CHRIST himself, without whom *there is no* Ephes. v.
life; who is the *head of the Church*, and by be- ^{23.}
ing join'd to whom, in the same faith, we Col. i. 24.
have fellowship one with another. From whence I Joh. i. 7.
appears the high necessity of our understanding
these main articles of our faith in that sound
and certain sense, which GOD intended we
should do at the discovery of them to us;
and therefore we may be sure, in these things,
as far as he requires us to believe, he has
spoken plainly. For otherwise, if we were
left to our own liberty, to frame our own in-
terpretations of the doctrines of faith, or were
left under an utter incapacity of coming to
an assurance in what sense they were at first
deliver'd, then we could not be oblig'd to an
unity

SERM. II. unity of faith amongst our selves, because that
 would be impossible, and so the end of
 GOD's revelation would entirely be disap-
 pointed, which was to bring us all in the
 communion of the same truths to the same
 great end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.
 1 Pet. i. 9. And we are as much assur'd there is but one
 Ephes. iv. Faith, as we are, that there is but one LORD
 5. and one GOD the object of it.

BUT now if it were not necessary, that
 all that are members of the Christian Church,
 1 Cor. i. should believe and *speake the same things*, as near
 10. as possible, in the essentials of our Faith; if
 it were a thing meerly indifferent and arbitra-
 ry what notions we entertain, or what ex-
 positions we make of the articles of our be-
 lief, in *that* case, there would not be one only
 faith but many; and the several members of
 the spiritual communion would have no agree-
 ment or intercourse with one another, and
 so the unity of the Church would be quite
 broken and dissolv'd. But that it should not
 be so, our *Blessed LORD himself, the foun-*
der of our faith, was infinitely careful, and
 Joh. xvii. earnestly pray'd to his Holy Father just before his
 21, 22. death, that it might not; and we are sure his
 Prayer was, and will be heard, to the last and
 truest intent and import of it. And as he
 pray'd this might not be, so must he be sup-
 posed to have left us under an obligation of
 preventing it as much as possible, and conse-
 quently of believing and *speaking the same*
things, as to the main and essential doctrines of
 religion,

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religion, and of receiving the belief of them SERM. II.
in that one and certain sense he intended to give
us when he first made the revelation.

So that indeed to misinterpret the form of faith, and to go off from that primitive sense in which it was first deliver'd, and may be understood, and to put our own mistakes and misconstructions on it, is really and truly not to believe at all, but to overthrow the Christian faith it self. So *St. Paul informs us of* 2 Tim. ii.
Hymeneus and Philetus, who, by misconstruing and misrepresenting that great article of the resurrection of the dead, and running it into a mystical and figurative sense, did consequently quite *cancel and overthrow the Christian faith*. If then we are thus strictly oblig'd even by GOD himself, in consequence of our spiritual union with his Church, to believe aright, and under the same apprehensions in matters of our faith, 'tis certain it must be in our power so to do, and that we are furnish'd with sufficient means in order to it, otherwise GOD would never have pass'd us under such an obligation; because his goodness and faithfulness will never suffer him to oblige any of his creatures to what he knows impossible for them to perform. And therefore GOD has made his revelations sufficiently plain and easy to be understood, as far as he intended we should believe them. And tho' we may not indeed be able to conceive the manner *how*, or the reasons *why* things are so, yet that they *are* so, he has made
H full,

SERM. II. full, distinct, and clear revelations, and we must believe him, and rest upon his Word; and beyond that, in cases he has not more clearly reveal'd, he does not himself require of us.

THUS for instance, in that great mystery of our Faith the doctrine of the Trinity, we are frequently and fully inform'd in the Holy Scriptures of the Distinction and Divinity of the several Persons, and at the same time of the perfect unity of the Godhead, tho' the mode and manner how these things are so, is far beyond our comprehension *now*, and so perhaps may *ever* continue to be, by reason of the finiteness frame and capacity of our minds not able to reach, or contain, or comprehend things infinite. Let us believe only so much as GOD himself has reveal'd, and we are safe. But if we will go beyond this, and will be tampering with the great mysteries of our Faith, and thrusting our own inconsistent opinions upon other men, as the true and only sense and meaning of the Articles, beyond what we are authoriz'd to do from the *Ana-*

Rom. xii. *logy of faith*, and the Word of GOD in scrip-
6. ture, this is our own rashness and presumption, and we may suffer for it, by taking on us to determine the truths of GOD in a different sense, or beyond, and above *what is written* in those sacred oracles. Almighty GOD in these mysteries obliges us to believe as he has reveal'd, and no further; and then surely his revelations may be understood in

in the sense that he intended them. And if SERM. II. they may be so understood, then we are oblig'd to understand them *so*, because the very end of the revelation was to direct and engage us to a right belief. So that when, with due care and application in matters of faith, so right and certain an information of them may be had from the revelations of the scripture, 'tis our own fault, our neglect, or our perverseness, if we run into dangerous errors and mistakes, and we are *certainly*, and highly accountable for them. And, how positive soever we may be, or how sincere soever we may think ourselves, or be thought by others, in these false and erroneous interpretations of the faith, which we give out, that will not excuse us; we are bound to believe the truth it self, and we had means of doing so, and we would not attend to them; either prejudice, or negligence, or pride, or singularity or wilfulness had led us wrong, and we may justly be call'd to a severe trial and punishment for our false opinions.

FROM hence then it sufficiently appears that GOD has given us a settled form and rule of faith to guide us, that he has given us sufficient means of knowing it, that he obliges us to receive it as he has given it, and that if we go from it, 'tis the error of our present way, and will be our condemnation hereafter.

I THEREFORE now proceed in the second place to shew that this very same faith,

SERM. II. *this form of sound words, is once for all deliver'd to the Church, and to be continued in it to after ages, without alteration, without addition, or diminution. This is the proper interpretation of the Greek word ἀπαξ in the text, ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ μετ' ἀπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις, which should be render'd, once for all deliver'd to the Saints. The faith that was once for all deliver'd by CHRIST and his Apostles, to which nothing need, nor*

Rev. xxii. ought to be *added*, nor must any thing be removed or *taken* from it. And therefore the 18, 19. Grand Heresy of the *Gnosticks*, against whom this whole epistle of St. *Jude* is directly aim'd, stands, in the verse after my text, condemn'd under a very black and odious character by this Apostle, as having introduc'd a quite new scheme of principles in religion utterly inconsistent with the Primitive faith, and expressly contradictory to the main and essential articles of it. *There are certain men*, says the Jude 4. Holy Apostle, *crept in unwares, who were before of old ordain'd to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of GOD into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord GOD, and our Lord JESUS CHRIST. These ill men, it seems, under a vain pretence, and presumption of themselves, as being the most pure and holy Saints of GOD, or, as the Cant ran then, and since, the Elect and sanctified ones, gave a loose to all sorts of wantonness and lust, and, being given over to a reprobate sense,*
proceed-

proceeded so far at last, as to make gross and *SERM. II.*
heterodox innovations in the very first principles of religion, the belief of one only GOD, and his blessed Son CHRIST JESUS. An account of whose strange wild errors, which I need not here refer my audience to, may be seen at large in the antient books of *Irenæus*.

AGAINST these here St. *Jude* prescribes our having recourse to the antient oracles of the Christian Faith, as *once deliver'd* by CHRIST and his Apostles, as a means to preserve, good men at least, from those dangerous and pernicious errors, if others by their own fault were past either remedy or recovery from them. It is therefore plain from hence, that in our disputes about the doctrines of religion, we are to look back to those original fountains of Divine and Spiritual truth, that were at First *open'd*, and flow'd down ever since through the *Church the City of* *Psal. xlv.* GOD, and have refresh'd and *made it glad* in⁴ every age. Hence we may fetch and plead the true *Prescription* against Hereticks and innovators in religion, that all we are to receive, as the dictates of necessary Faith, is fully reveal'd to us and contain'd in the Word of GOD, not to be revers'd or chang'd by the opinions and sentiments of men. Beyond this, whoever shall attempt or endeavour to intrude upon us any thing, as an article of faith, or doctrine of the Gospel, he is to be rejected, though *an Angel from heaven him-* *Gal. i. 8.*
self

SERM. II *self* should do it. After the preaching of CHRIST and his Apostles, whose Doctrine is fully comprehended in the books of the new Testament, there was a final close and seal fix'd and set to all revelation, at least of the great and essential doctrines of Religion. Other writings since are but an enlargement and interpretation upon this Primitive doctrine, and are to be prov'd and tried by it, as the only test of sacred and divine truth; from which whatsoever opinion goes off or varies, it is to be detested and abhor'd as an enemy to the Gospel of CHRIST, and the eternal interests of mens souls.

BUT the objection here will be, How shall we know the doctrine we receive to be the true meaning and intendment of GOD's Word, since so many men, of different ages and tempers, have every one abounded in his own sense of Scripture, and contended for it, and recommended it earnestly to others as the only true one? The answer to this, I think sufficient, is this, That in the necessary Articles of Faith and Religion, the Scripture compar'd with it self is sufficiently plain and easy to the common understandings of men, as it is fit it should be in matters of so very high, and such immediate consequence to salvation; and that an honest and faithful industry may, thro' the proper means and grace of GOD, arrive at a sufficient and saving knowledge of them. If we will not allow and maintain this, we must with no less than blasphemy assert, and hold, that

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that GOD either did not, or could not speak SERM. II.
intelligibly to the common understandings of men, in order to their salvation, *then* when he most intended it. And if GOD intended the Holy Scripture for a Rule of Faith as well as Manners, then the Scripture in it self is fit to be the guide and measure of mens opinions and interpretations, and not the interpretations of men and their fancies the rule of Scripture.

THE writings of men may indeed clear and illustrate the truths of GOD to a greater advantage, and enforce them with powerful motives, and proper representations of their greatest consequence. But in all cases of dispute and controversy what is the true and essential faith of the Church of GOD, *to the* Isa. viii.
Law and to the Testimony, there is our rule,^{20.} on which we must depend, and from whence lies no appeal. But when the books and writings of learned and pious men, a great many of whom *themselves* laid down their lives in confirmation of their Faith and Doctrine; when all, or most of these shall be found so agreeing and consentient in what they teach for many centuries together to the sense of Scripture, as capable of being, or obvious and easy to be understood: This, though it gives no new authority to the word of GOD, yet 'tis a comfort and encouragement to good, honest and plain men, that they are not mistaken in the truth, and a good ground for learned men to proceed on and urge the opinion of these
3 primitive

SERM. II. primitive Saints, in its behalf, against the
 ~~~~~ adversary.

AND this indeed has been the case of our own, and of the Church of GOD in general in these worst and latter ages, amidst those many outrageous and impudent Sects, and Heresies, especially that madness of Infidelity, that have of late prevail'd ; and which, after having been refuted and rejected for so many hundred years together, with universal authority, dare yet rise and shew their *serpentine* heads again amongst us, and attempt to shake and endanger the Faith of some, by their own former fault prepar'd to receive and entertain them. Against these immodest, and erroneous innovators we have this to plead ; Our Faith is the same that it was for the first three hundred years in the antient Church, before ever religion was much made a matter of publick dispute, or brought into general councils : And when it was brought there, yet even *then*, that great council of *Nice* did not take upon it to appoint and constitute, but declare only the true Christian Faith before receiv'd from the first beginnings of Christianity : And this \* has several times been made appear from the universal consent of the Fathers and Writers of those times in the first and purest ages.

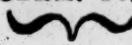
So that the Church of CHRIST has had but one true *Faith*, *one Doctrine*, that has continued down from the very first, through all

\* See Dr. Bull's *Defens. Fid. Nic.*

the various turns, rust, and revolution of so SERM. II.  
many ages, from the very beginning of it to  
the present times. And GOD himself intend-  
ing, at the first delivery of it, that it should  
do so, and ordering by his wise providence  
that it might do so, there was no need of any  
new Revelation, or any new Wonders, to give  
it either a further discovery or confirmation  
than it had before. And therefore our pre-  
sent faith is the very same with that of the  
Apostles and first Christians, that same faith  
*which was once for all deliver'd to the Saints*;  
and for that reason it more highly concerns us  
to be careful how we part with that which we  
have *thus* upon the best authority receiv'd.

WHICH leads me to the Third and last  
general Head to be spoken to, that we should  
think it our duty, and make it our endeavour  
to defend and maintain this Holy Faith, with  
those degrees and measures of vigour, zeal,  
and care, that are necessary, against all that  
shall attempt at any time to corrupt or op-  
pose it: And I shall here shew in what in-  
stances we are requir'd to do so, *more especial-*  
*ly*; and in what manner we are bound to *con-*  
*tend earnestly for this faith, which was once de-*  
*liver'd to the Saints*. And surely if any thing  
requires, and will justify our earnestness and  
just degrees of contention, this will do so,  
when we see the great and chief points of our  
holy religion thus oppos'd and disputed by the  
proud confidence, and erroneous presumption

SERM. II.

 of ill men. Those very points and articles of our faith, upon which the whole frame of Christianity stands supported, and upon the truth and certainty of which all our present hopes, and our future and eternal happiness depend. If we don't discover a just and hearty concern in this case, for the honour of GOD and our own Salvation, we betray and give up the interests of Religion and Truth it self; and so far as we are not careful to reprove and discountenance such Capital errors in other men, if we are able to do so, we may be truly said to countenance and encourage them, and are partakers of their guilt and dangerous consequences. The defence of the order and discipline of our *own particular* Church and Constitution, *do* very well deserve our zealous and hearty care, against whatever principles or practices of men we apprehend may threaten or tend to overthrow them at any time. But when the very life and being of our common Christianity it self is threaten'd and aim'd at, by the bold and impious assertions of the foulest errors of Hereticks and Infidels, who shed their poison and malignant influence all around, and about us, then for us to be tame, and quiet, and gentle, and easy, and soft, and mild, and passive, is an argument only of our want of courage, sense or conscience, and of a just concern for GOD's honour and our own salvation. But these are more wide and general

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## *Infidelity and Apostacy.*

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ral considerations ; I shall therefore proceed SERM. II.  
more nearly and immediately to shew, in  
what particular instances Chiefly our hearty  
zeal and concern for the truths of religion are  
to express themselves, in opposition to the  
errors of other men, whether of Heresy or  
Infidelity.

IN the *First* place then, we are to endeavour to convince these persons by sound reason and argument, that being the first and most proper way upon the minds of men that are not given over to a reprobate sense.

BUT, *Secondly*, where they are so, and will not be convinc'd by reason, but either in wilfulness, or pride, or any other vicious principle, oppose themselves, we are not disallow'd in that case, and it may be a very good restraint upon them to expose their wickedness and folly in terms of sharpness and severity, to bring their persons to a just shame, and their doctrines to disgrace.

THIRDLY, Where both these methods fail, then the aids of Authority and Power are to be call'd and taken in, to correct the influence of impious errors, and to prevent their contagion and dangerous influence upon others. Whatever other methods of shewing our zealous concern and interest for the maintenance of the truths and principles of religion there are, they are either such as are of a less and more remote consequence, or else they may

SERM. II. very well fall in with, and be comprehended  
 under those I have mention'd.

AND here, *First*, we are to use the best reasons and arguments we can to convince men of their religious errors, by giving a just and satisfactory account of the Faith and Hope that  
 1 Pet. iii. is in our selves, and by shewing the rottenness  
 35. and insincerity of those grounds and reasons upon which the ill opinions and errors of our adversaries are built and supported; this being the best way of prevailing upon the minds of men, if that may be done, and of preserving or restoring others from mistakes and errors in religion of the most fatal and pernicious consequence. By using this method alone, 'tis possible we may prevail for the security or recovery of truth, and in the spirit of calmness and meekness persuade men, and bring them back to a sense of themselves, and their own duty: Which was the reason of the Apostle's  
 2 Tim. ii. good advice in this case, in meekness instructing  
 35. them that oppose themselves, if GOD peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth. This therefore is first to be tried, and if this way will do alone, the other two methods I mention'd are very happily superseded, as being less agreeable to the rational nature of man, however necessary sometimes in cases of stubborn, impudent, and foul opposition and revolt.

AND, GOD be thank'd, our cause against his enemies, and those adversaries to the truth  
 and

and his Holy Religion is sufficiently prepar'd SERM. II.  
and furnish'd with arguments, both from reason  
and Divine Authority, to support and vindicate  
it self against all the wicked suggestions and  
principles of men, that have risen, or still may  
rise against it\*. Nor have these arguments  
not been us'd, with great eloquence and power  
of perswasion, against the adversaries of our  
Faith, both in former times, and more espe-  
cially of late, by the hands of pious and learned  
men, whose works are too well known in this  
learned and venerable audience for me to men-  
tion them. Nor is there a greater and more  
melancholy sign and argument of the deep,  
ingrown, inveterate corruption and degeneracy  
of the present age, of *this adulterous and sinful  
generation*, than that the best and most power-  
ful reasons that have been yet offer'd in the  
vindication of the principles of religion, have  
had no more large and powerful effects. But  
though *all the strong holds of Satan*, by which 2 Cor. x.  
he maintains and keeps up his empire of Sin<sup>4</sup>  
and Infidelity over the minds of evil men,  
have been so often broken down, and all his  
forces of the Kingdom of darkness so totally  
*disarray'd* and routed; yet such is the impu-  
dence, the uncontrollable hardness of heart, and

\* I shall here only mention an admirable book  
written by Dr. JENKIN, late master of St. John's  
College Cambridge, *Of the Reasonableness and Cer-  
tainty of the Christian Religion*, in two parts, than  
which there can be none better to that purpose, and  
I know none like it.



SERM. II. stubbornness of mens pride, of evil opinions in religion, that they will yield to nothing, when they are set against it, which either the authority of GOD's own word, or the soberest and firmest reasonings of men can offer for their amendment and conviction. It may be highly expedient therefore,

IN the next and second place to endeavour to bring these men to shame and reproach, that will not come into reason, and to try to discourage and discountenance at least, if we cannot subdue their insolence; and that too, by close rebukes and expostulations, and in terms of some sharpness and severity, to bring both their persons and their doctrines under a just disgrace. For many persons, that will not give up their false and mistaken opinions to the force of argument and reason, yet are to be put out of countenance by a quick and lively representation of the baseness and folly of their bad principles, and so lose that ground in time, which a greater credit and reputation in the world would have given them over the faith and sentiments of others. The Holy Scripture is not without several instances of dealing after this manner with persons under the sway of gross and corrupt opinions in matters of religion. Thus *Elijah scoff'd* at the idolatrous *Israelites*, for their ridiculous and senseless Superstitions in the worship of their strange and foolish Gods; and some of the other prophets are very close and severe upon the

1 Kings  
xviii. 27.

## *Infidelity and Apostacy.*

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the vices and follies of men, laying them open SERM II.  
to the abhorrence and contempt of those that  
heard them. And even Our Gracious LORD  
Himself thought it not inconsistent with his  
own most *blessed Spirit of meekness*, than which  
no man *had ever more or greater*, to tax and  
scourge with severe and terrible menaces and  
upbraidings the arrant hypocrisy and apostacy  
of the Scribes and Pharisees, a generation of  
hypocrites, that by their false and rotten prin-  
ciples, and counterfeit practices in religion,  
under refin'd and sanctify'd pretences, had quite  
perverted the true sense and understanding of  
GOD's law, and disappointed it in its main  
and just design and effect, the Reformation of  
the minds and manners of men. *St. Paul like-* 1 Cor. xvi.  
*wise we find denouncing* both GOD's high dis- 22.  
pleasure and his own, and severely aggravating Gal. v. 12.  
the guilt of those ill men that would any way 2 Tim. iv.  
pervert the Gospel of CHRIST, from its true  
and genuine design or meaning. And in this  
very Epistle of my text, with what high de-  
testation and terms of the greatest abhorrence  
and reproach does the Apostle here draw the  
black character, and expose the dangerous cor-  
ruptions of the Gnostick Hereticks! *Ungod-*  
*ly men*, says he, *filthy dreamers, spots in your*  
*feasts of charity, clouds without water, wan-*  
*dering stars, for whom is reserv'd the black-*  
*ness of darkness for ever.* These are the  
best words he can allow those grand cor-  
rupters of the truth of the Gospel, and so  
terrible

SERM. II. terrible a condemnation does he consign them  
 over to.

So that when there is just reason for it, and even charity to wicked men themselves, or to persons yet innocent, requires it, we are not to be blamed, if we bring out and display the perverseness and corruptions of unbelievers in their most foul and odious colours. Because most men are govern'd in their regard for others, not so much by the just reason of things, and the true and real grounds of esteem it self, as by the reputation and sway they bear in the common vogue and opinion of the world. And the doctrines men teach and propagate are apt for the most part to prevail in the world more or less, according to the Fame or Character current of their several teachers. And therefore by a just, open, and deserv'd representation, to expose the dangerous and evil tenets of men to the view, and scorn, and hatred of others, and to bring them under a publick censure and disrepute, is one of the best and most effectual ways, and consequently not an unlawful one, of doing service to the truth it self, and of giving a due check and restraint to the forwardness and sauciness of error.

BUT let this still be done within the bounds of Charity, and really to serve the interests of truth and justice, and then there is not so much danger of excess in the exercise and practice of it. For he that is angry purely  
 with



with the *sin* it self, and with the sinner only SERM. II.  
for the sake of *that*, will, in his severest deter-  
minations and prosecutions against evil princi-  
ples or evil men, and his declarations against  
them, not be apt to break, or exceed the li-  
mits of his own obedience, or to offend either  
against the laws of his duty to GOD, or those  
of his charity and love to men. And in the  
mean time he may, by a good spirit, or a good  
wit, do GOD great service in the world, by  
laying out those talents to the *service of the*  
*altar*, and to the honour of religion, which  
herein serve their best and truest end; and  
without which they have nothing in themselves  
to be so much desir'd, or so really valuable.

BUT if after both the former endeavours  
have been us'd, men happen to be so far rivet-  
ed in vice and error, as to be stubborn and ob-  
stinate against the best dictates of reason, and  
proof-harden'd against the most tender resent-  
ments of shame: If they have so far *harden'd*  
*their foreheads*, that *they cannot blush for all* Jer. vi.  
*their abominations* of the wicked and evil prin-  
ciples they have consented to,

THEN in the third and last place, the pro-  
per aids of power and authority are justly to  
be call'd in to the support of truth, and the  
suppression of error, to correct the insolence of  
unbelievers, and to prevent the contagion and  
ill influence of their bad principles upon others.  
And, when all other attempts have fail'd, this has  
been found the best, as well as last resort in times

SERM. II. of great and popular errors; after all the rest have been us'd, has prov'd successful: And this indeed is the great end both of sacred and secular power, to guard the honour and truths of GOD and his religion from the contempt and corruptions of sinful men. And therefore Princes and Rulers were ever yet esteem'd, both by office and title, the great patrons and protectors of Religion and the Church of GOD.

Ifa. xlix.  
23.

*Kings were its nursing Fathers, and their Queens its nursing Mothers.* And indeed without this, their power must needs be look'd upon as of less account and esteem, not worthy of that divine fountain from whence it rises, nor tending to any noble purpose, nor determining in any truly high and excellent event. For what are the trifling and petty interests and concerns of this short perishing life, or of this world it self, that can fully deserve or engage so great an authority in the pursuit or preservation of them! This life it self is only in order to a better and eternal one; and therefore whatever power has the care and direction of this present time, plac'd under its authority, if it will answer its true design, must have a due and main regard to what will come hereafter.

AND this our own wise and excellent governors both in Church and State, have always thought it their duty and their glory to do, as well as their best and truest interest. And, if it had not been for this, in all probability,

bility, not only our own particular Church SERM. II. and Religion had long since perish'd, and *Her great Beauty of Holiness been destroy'd* (which *all the world*, except some unworthy persons who *should* be her own members, admire and celebrate) but even Christianity itself had long since been lost and sunk away under the dregs of Heresy, and Schism, of Atheism and Infidelity. But the effectual laws of the State, and the severe and awful censures of the Church, both in their private and publick councils, have often given a stop to the propagation of prophaneness, and turn'd *that* to the disgrace and shame of ill-designing men, which otherwise would have been their pride and triumph, to corrupt and taint religion itself with their own impurities.

AND as this is the great end and office of publick governments, so 'tis really of all power whatever, though moving within a more confin'd compass, and bounded within a narrower sphere: And 'tis the great guilt and fond negligence of *any* Superiors to suffer those that live under them at any time to run riot, either in the practice, or principles of religion. And GOD Himself has a strict eye over them in this matter, and will demand a severe account of their abuse or neglect of the power and authority that he has given them, hereafter. Reason may argue long enough against the prevalence of vice and error, and wit and imagination may long enough paint and re-



SERM. II. present the inconvenience and deformity of both: After all, 'tis *Authority* and *Law* that must govern humane nature, which is otherwise under no restraints, for the most part, any longer than till it can well tell how to break through and overcome them. 'Tis here then that men discover a true and genuine zeal and concern for promoting, or preserving the Honour of GOD and his Service, when they chiefly employ their power and authority, as well as their reason and other abilities, in its protection and defence.

THIS the bad state of the world stands in need of, and very much requires at present; and without this, where there is room and opportunity for it, we cannot be said to answer the utmost intention and purpose of the Apostle's command and advice in my text, of *contending earnestly for the faith which was once deliver'd to the Saints.*

WHICH faith, that we may all preserve, keep *pure, whole, and undefil'd*, without *spot, and blameless*, GOD of his infinite mercy grant, for JESUS CHRIST his sake, to whom with the HOLY FATHER, and BLESSED SPIRIT, be ascrib'd the Kingdom, Power, and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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SERMON III.  
A  
PRESERVATIVE  
Against the growing  
*Infidelity and Apostacy*  
OF THE  
PRESENT AGE, &c.

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ST. JOHN'S

PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH

OF THE

PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK



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T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**I** *HAVE* purposely added the next discourse, having lately been inform'd, that the Unhappy person, whom I have dealt a little severely with in the former papers (for which I need make no apology, he deserves it) first fell off from his Christian Faith, and the seriousness of his profession, to relieve and support his indigence, and that from the hands of the enemies of all true religion; as thinking it not a bad exchange, to part with his soul for money, and to barter blasphemy for bread; and this too chiefly amongst the Jews, it seems, a very impolitick people certainly, thus to encourage

*encourage and assist the highest affronts to Christianity within its own dominions; who may chance to feel the consequences of this hereafter, whenever Christians themselves come once to be so much concern'd for the honour of their own religion, as these men, its worst enemies, and others are set with spight against it.*

*But however that be, or whether what I have heard be true in the present instance or not, 'tis yet infallibly certain, that there lies no principle more at the root and foundation of Apostacy and Infidelity in general, than an excessive desire, love, and fondness for the advantages and enjoyments of this world! It was covetousness, that, in his own Apostle, betray'd to death the LORD of Life himself; and many a man has left his Christianity behind him, to keep pace with the speed of his own sensual desires, and temporal security. And 'tis because men are so loth to part  
with*

*with their lusts and passions, their sensual and irregular inclinations, that they are so unwilling to think a religion true, that alarms and threatens them with a future and strict account to be given for all these things ; and therefore are ever* Ecclef. xi. *ready to make head against it themselves, and to close in with the arguments, how weak soever, of others offer'd to that purpose.*

*There is no way therefore to put men upon a surer foundation of standing true to their Holy Christian Faith, than to acquaint them on what terms and conditions they first embrac'd it, what they must determine to quit and part with for it ; what temptations of terrors and allurements they will be sure to meet with in its way, and with what degrees of firmness and resolution of mind they must take care to fore-arm and furnish themselves against all these, if they would make good their first pretensions : For this removes the ground*

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of



*of an after-fall, and cuts off and prevents the original occasion of the most fatal miscarriage ; and to do this is the main, and indeed only design of the following discourse.*

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S E R-

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# SERMON III.

P R E A C H ' D

First before the UNIVERSITY,  
and some time after, at the  
Reverend the Arch-deacon's  
VISITATION, at St. Ma-  
ry's, Oxon, October the 5th,  
1727.

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LUKE xiv. 33.

*So likewise, whosoever he be of you,  
that forsaketh not all that he hath,  
he cannot be my disciple.*

**T**HIS Divine sentence being de- SERM. III.  
liver'd by our Blessed LORD, in  
the stile and manner of compari-  
son, has a plain reference to what  
goes before it, and returns us back for a more  
full and clear understanding of it, to some of  
the foregoing verses of this chapter; where  
we find at the 25th and 26th verses, our SA-

SERM. III. **VIOUR CHRIST** proposes his doctrine to the numerous assembly that attended him, and acquaints them openly and freely, without reserve, concealment, or disguise, what present damage and disadvantage they must incur and undergo in their embracing and pursuit of his religion; on what terms they must come into him, if they would do so, and that they must give up, and resign all other the nearest and dearest objects of their affection for his sake.

Ver. 26. *If any man come to me, says our LORD plainly, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple:* That is, if a man does not maintain in his heart such a calm and indifferent affection for all these his nearest relations and interests, as to be ready to part with them all, and actually to do so, whenever the retaining them becomes inconsistent with his duty to his great LORD and Master, it is to no purpose for that man to take on him the profession of Christianity, which he can neither answer, nor make good under his present disposition, and would be sure to desert and betray in time of temptation, or for his own advantage.

AND therefore we find **CHRIST** charges his hearers and followers to be well aware of this before-hand, and throughly to state and estimate the degrees of their own strength and resolution in this matter, before ever they engage in so very serious and important a design.

This



This he represents and illustrates under a two-SERM. III. fold similitude, that of a *Builder*, and of a *King* going out to battel; who, if each of Ver. 28. them *respectively* should not well consider, and Ver. 31. compute their charge and forces in the entrance on their design, would be fain to quit it afterwards with loss, and retreat with shame and disappointment both to their persons and affairs. And then our LORD comes and repeats what he had asserted and laid down before, as now more clearly establish'd, and enforce'd by the former comparisons; *so likewise*, says he, *whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*: He cannot be so sincerely and heartily at the beginning, nor will he ever continue so long, in times of temptation and difficulty.

THESE words of our Blessed SAVIOUR are by no means what they call a *doctrine of perfection*, as some men would very willingly persuade us, according to the looseness and indifference of their own temper and inclinations to the practice of the duty it self; but they are a matter of general and indispensable obligation upon all men whatever, that take upon them the profession of Christianity: For, the practice of this duty is not propos'd to a few persons only, as a pitch of higher virtue and more noble and divine attainment, but as the very lowest term and condition on which a common Christian must proceed, and with-

SERM. III. out which he cannot come up to, or maintain  
 ~~~~~ his distinction and character.

NOR were these words directed only to the Apostles and Disciples, as to persons of a more refin'd capacity or greater information, or higher assistances; but they were deliver'd to the promiscuous multitude, to persons of mean, gross, and shallow understandings, of very narrow, and limited qualifications, and endowments of mind: For so we are inform'd at the 25th verse, *'That there went great multitudes with him, and he turn'd and said unto them, to them all together, we see, without difference or distinction; If any man come after me, and hate not his father and mother, and so on, he cannot be my disciple. And 'tis to the same Auditors, and in the train and continuance of the same discourse, that CHRIST resumes and re-inforces the same doctrine in the words that I have here chosen for my present Subject.*

IN discoursing on which, my design and business shall be, in the *First* place, to explain what is here properly to be understood by forsaking all that a man has for the sake of CHRIST.

whether SECONDLY, I will endeavour to make out the ~~other~~ Inconsistence of the contrary temper and disposition to what our LORD here enjoins and requires of us, with the very name and profession of Christianity: *He cannot be my disciple.*

AND

Infidelity and Apostacy.

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AND *First*, what is here properly to be understood by *forsaking all that a man has* SERM III.
for the sake of CHRIST, and with what cautions and limitations, in point of reason and prudence, a man is oblig'd, or allow'd to proceed about so difficult an instance of his duty: For when there appears a competition between a man's religious duty and his main worldly interest; and when he is in general resolv'd with himself, as every sincere Christian is, or ought to be, that if *both* are not consistent, religion then *ought* to prevail, and carry the preference in his esteem and conduct; 'tis a matter then of the last and greatest concernment to him, that he be rightly inform'd in the particulars of his case. And as he cannot answer it to GOD, or his own conscience, if he should postpone his religion to his interest, how great soever, so neither can he account for it to his own reason and judgment, or those of other men, if he should throw up and ruin all his present advantages upon a rash mistaken Supposition of his duty; where, upon a due and diligent enquiry, he might discover himself free from any such sacred bond or obligation.

As little as this world is worth in comparison of a better and future State, 'tis however the *best* a man has at present, and *that* upon which GOD and reason allow every man to cast an eye of some regard, and by which a man is capable of serving the great ends of
GOD's

SERM. III. GOD's providence, and his own duty: For
 if the present advantages and enjoyments of
 our life were not worth our keeping, they
 could never be made a sacrifice fit for GOD
 either to command or to accept. 'Twas King
David's reasoning and his pious resolution in
 his treaty with *Araunah* the *Jebusite*, that he
 would not offer a sacrifice or burnt-offerings
 unto the LORD his GOD of that which cost
 him nothing. And if a man would devote all
 his worldly and temporal interests in main-
 tenance of his conscience, he no further gives
 a proof by *this* of his affection to GOD and
 his duty, than as he willingly parts with
 something really valuable and dear to himself
 on the accounts of GOD and religion. For
 what evidence of our love to GOD is it to
 give him that which we our selves despise,
 and are otherwise ready to fling away upon
 all occasions?

2 Sam.
xxiv. 24.

WE see then, that when our SAVIOUR
 in his Gospel demands our temporal satisfaction
 and advantages to be given up a sacrifice in
 the defence and support of our duty and re-
 ligion, that he must allow in us a competent
 measure of esteem and kindness for these things,
 as necessary to render them grateful and ac-
 cepted to himself. And even he himself ac-
 knowledges that the interests of this world
 are something worth, both in themselves, and
 with regard to us, because he thinks it ne-
 cessary to propose such high returns to us in
 exchange,

exchange, and compensation for them in his SERM. III.
Gospel.

BUT now, since we find that both religion and reason allow and suppose our temporal advantages to carry a considerable worth and weight of value in them, as being indeed our best things, with regard to the present life, and whilst we continue in this state highly needful for us, and for our better support and happiness in our passage through this world, upon this account a man is both permitted and required, in reason and conscience, when the contest lies between his interest and his duty, to proceed with all wariness, tenderness, and caution, with all prudential care and concern in his enquiry into the merits and importance of the controversy before him. And as long as he allows and resolves the balance shall turn on the side of religion at last, if the right be there, and admits no corrupt bias from present interest upon his thoughts, nor suffers any by-respects, nor partial reflections, to mingle with his reasonings and consultations, there is, and can be no danger at all, as to the issue of his debate and determinations. If he should give up the world, and even his very life it self a sacrifice and offering to his duty, upon a mistaken reasoning, yet as long as he does it upon the best and exactest enquiry that a wise and good man could make in his condition and circumstances, he *suffers* indeed, 'tis true, when upon a clearer

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infor-

SERM. III. information he needed not to have *done so*, but he shall not fail of his reward and *crown of righteousness* for his doing so, because, according to his notices and apprehension of things, it was necessary for him he should do so.

BUT GOD Almighty did not make humane nature fond and desirous of sufferings, and therefore we may decline them, as far as we are able with innocence. But he that runs himself forward, without prudence, thought, or a reasonable enquiry upon a suffering state, out of I know not what blind, precipitant, mistaken zeal, though seemingly pious and affectionate, if he be excus'd for his imprudence in this case, 'tis as much as he ought in reason to expect; but he can claim no reward for any religious sufferings at the hand of GOD, because they are not wise and reasonable.

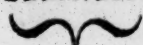
Eccles. v. GOD himself, as we read, *has no pleasure in*
^{4.} Eccles. v. *fools*, and he that offers such a blind sacrifice
 1. as this I mention'd, offers *a fool's sacrifice*, without thought, and religious information; and draws only a needless damage upon his own advantages.

BUT then, in the *First Place*, when, upon a due comparison, and full consideration of arguments on every side, a man is convinc'd and sees clearly, that the retention and security of his worldly interests cannot be had or maintain'd without a direct violation of his conscience, of his Loyalty to GOD and his Blessed SAVIOUR, there to quit and part with

with all for his duty, even with his very life SERM. III.
 it self, 'tis the glory of his wisdom, and *the* 1 Joh. v. 4.
victory and triumph of his *Faith*. Nor, if he
 does this with some reluctance and regret, shall
that change the nature, or abate the degrees of
 his Heroic piety, nor take off from the great-
 ness of his future reward; because he still pro-
 ceeds with a free determination of his will up-
 on the best convictions of his judgment, and
 with an esteem and reverence towards Almighty
 GOD superiour to all other considerations
 whatsoever.

AND 'tis this that GOD expects from men,
 and what he will faithfully reward them for.
 And as for those little *bankerings* of affection
 still towards the world, which cause some un-
 easiness and forenness in our minds on this oc-
 casion, these are either quite innocent, because
 they are unavoidable, or else they are real ad-
 vantages to the virtue and acceptance of our
 suffering piety, and will be a means of enhan-
 sing our future recompence. For those in-
 stances of our Faith and Piety, which we per-
 form with the dutiful consent of our will
 against such temptations of regret and uneasi-
 ness in our present nature, shall have an ad-
 vantage of glory and reward hereafter, for this
 reason, because we exercise them in contempt
 and neglect of greater opposition, and more
 powerful discouragements. But then this is
 not all; for,

SERM. III.



SECONDLY, Not only where the world and its comforts are certainly and clearly irreconcilable and inconsistent with our conscience, and our allegiance to our duty, but even when the matter is doubtful and still under the dispute of our reason, and we can come to no resolution, whether we can innocently hold to the world or not; even in that case we are bound to let it go; and *that*, though the doubts be even and equal on both sides of the debate, much more then, if the advantage of argument lies strongest on the side of Religion. I say, though the doubts be equal; for in that case, if we quit our worldly advantages, we are sure we do not sin; but if we keep any thing of that nature, whilst with any reason we question whether we lawfully can, or not, then, if we will take St. *Paul's* word for it, we are guilty; because *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*; that is, whatsoever a man does of this nature, and with these circumstances, without a due perswasion and resolution of mind concerning the perfect lawfulness of it, he certainly sins in doing so; and that is an argument in general, and I think a very sufficient one to resolve the particular case I have been now insisting on.

Rom. xiv.
23.

BUT then, Thirdly, if a man is well satisfied within himself, upon just and impartial consideration, that, when the controversy rises between his religion and his worldly interests, he may with very good reason reconcile them both,

both, and retain both very safely without clash- SERM. III.
ing ; then any *other* person's dissatisfaction in
this case, or his acting differently, is no good
reason why the former person should con-
demn himself, or be condemn'd by others.

Why should my liberty be judg'd of by another 1 Cor. x.
man's conscience ? says St. Paul ; he speaks it ^{29.}

in another case indeed, but very applicable to
the present one in this good sense ; why should
I be censur'd and traduc'd for a practice, in
which I am satisfied of the reasonableness and
lawfulness of it, because another man is of a
different persuasion, and therefore takes a ve-
ry different course himself ? Every man's own
mind must be the immediate guide of his own
actions, and must answer for them ; and, in
matters of dispute, it may form different de-
terminations answerable to the various light it
receives, and the several degrees of evidence,
about the same affair.

WE know, or at least reasonably and cha-
ritably suppose it has been so, in a remarkable
case amongst our selves ; I mean that of oaths
upon forfeiture enjoin'd us by the government,
and for its own security. Whereby many have
suffer'd in their temporal interests, whilst they
refus'd submission to them ; and others, no
question, have yielded to their obligation with
a just sincerity and innocence, and without
guilt or sinful prevarication with their own
consciences. In this and other like cases, I
think, St. Paul's manner of determination
would

SERM. III. would be of great and general use, and well
 ~~~~~ become us all, and prevent ill surmises and  
 Rom. xiv. suspicions of one another: *Let not him that*  
 3. *sweareth despise him that sweareth not; and*  
*let not him that sweareth not judge him that*  
*sweareth.* The person that cannot comply in  
 such a case, we ought not to reflect upon, or  
 despise, as weak and silly, of a scrupulous and  
 superstitious conscience: And, on the other  
 side, he that can comply, let him not be cen-  
 sur'd as a bold, rash, incogitant, temporizing  
 Rom. xiv. sinner: For *Almighty God*, the judge of all  
 3. men, may *receive* and approve of both, as act-  
 ing upon a truly conscientious, though a very  
 different principle. And thus the case stands,  
 as I have stated it, in a controversy and com-  
 petition between our temporal advantages and  
 our conscience in matters of a known, or sus-  
 pected unlawfulness: In which case we act like  
 truly religious men, and shall be rewarded for  
 it, whatsoever loss or disinterest we may sustain  
 at present, in refusing our compliance to a sin-  
 ful action, or what we are not sure is not so.

BUT then, Fourthly, let us be careful not  
 to deceive our selves in a matter of such very  
 near importance and concernment to us, as the  
 resigning all our worldly advantages must  
 needs be. This is a point well worth our ut-  
 most caution and deliberation, that we do it  
 right, not fancying or imagining with our selves  
 we act upon a religious principle, when indeed  
 we do not; and yet this may be really the  
 case

case with us, as well as it may have been many times with others before us. For there are many side views and oblique respects, that insinuate themselves into our minds, that we are sometimes hardly aware of our selves, which yet, if we did not by a general disapprobation reject, and disallow, would be apt to infect and mar the glory and virtue of our very best actions. And if any of these should happen so far to prevail within us, as to the main influencing principles of our acting, our reward from religion in that case would be suspended, and we must be left to take any other that the nature and tendency of the action it self, barely consider'd as such, could supply us with.

THUS, if a meer notion of proud honour or ostentation, if a principle of disdainful in-compliance, if a spur of furious and inconsiderate zeal for, or against a thing, be the predominant over-ruling principle of our standing out or suffering in a cause, however good, under these circumstances, we may have our *reward* indeed, as our *Saviour* tells us; but Matth. vi. 'tis not from GOD's favour assigning it to us,<sup>2.</sup> nor is it any special argument of his acceptance or approbation. We have known that a sturdy humour from natural temper, or the pride of a good cause, will very often put on the semblance of conscience, and are often mistaken for it: And therein seems to me to be the difference in suffering between some of our *modern* confessors, and those much greater, and far

SERM. III. far better of *former* times ; who, in the *meek-*  
 Jam. iii. *ness of wisdom*, submitted to the injuries of men,  
 13. and were supported under them, not by a haugh-  
 ty highness of spirit, nor by the vain noise and  
 applauses of the multitude, but by the silent  
 and comfortable reflections on their own sin-  
 cerity and innocence, and by the gracious in-  
 fluences of GOD'S Holy Spirit descending on  
 them, and always ready at hand to revive and  
 strengthen the souls of humble good men, un-  
 der their forest sufferings at any time for *his*  
 Ifai. lvii. *own and righteousness sake*.  
 15.

I HAVE thus far endeavour'd to explain what is strictly and properly here intended by a man's forsaking all for the sake of CHRIST; in what cases he is actually oblig'd and bound to do so; and with what conduct and caution he is allow'd, and indeed requir'd to proceed in this matter, of so great moment and importance to himself; and that he take care he be not mistaken in the real principle of his acting or suffering in this kind.

THESE that I have mention'd, are the cases wherein we are indispensably bound actually to quit the world, and all its interests, and relations, because we cannot retain them without being actually guilty of a sin. And in that sense alone our SAVIOUR'S assertion in my text, can hold universally true as to the outward act it self; because 'tis certain that the true spirit of Christianity is *otherwise* well consistent with the comfortable circumstances of



## Infidelity and Apostacy.

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of this life, and a fulness of Temporal Prosperity. For *Godliness*, we are inform'd, *has the promises of this life, as well as of that which is to come*, and therefore cannot be thought inconsistent with the *completion* of those promises: Nor does the obligation of forsaking all that a man has, as to the outward act of it, reach every man, at all times of his life; and perhaps some persons never at all, not so much as once in their whole course of life; for they may come under no temptation of so severe a trial, and yet may prosper in the world, and go out of it too, in the true faith and obedience of their blessed Master; and after a pleasant and prosperous life here, be receiv'd at last into the joy of their LORD. So that this general pronuntiation of our Blessed SAVIOUR, *that whosoever he be of us that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be his disciple*, must in necessary reason admit of this limitation, he that does not actually forsake all, when he can no longer keep it with innocence, and the preservation of his duty. And this is the great rule for men to judge and determine by, how far, and how long the possession and enjoyment of the good things of this life are in conscience allow'd and lawful, and *where* and *when* they cease to be so.

BUT then, there is a more inward and spiritual sense and meaning of this our LORD's assertion, which lays hold on every Christian's conscience, and at all times, and periods, and in

N

what-

SERM. III.  
1 Tim. iv.

**SERM. III.** whatsoever state, or condition, or circumstances he may be. And it is this, that, whatsoever a man's outward possessions may be, he should take care in the mean time to preserve his mind *within*, under a due regulation, and his affections always so free and indifferent to these things, that he be ready, whenever call'd to it, to offer up all at the feet of CHRIST, his great LORD and Master, and submit to the loss of all, that he may not forfeit his interest in GOD's favour. Any greater degree of love to this world than is consistent with this free temper and disposition of soul, enclin'd and ready to part with all, whenever GOD by the dispensations of his providence may call for it, 'tis certain, is not reconcilable with being a true disciple of CHRIST, because it stands in direct opposition to the love of GOD. *For if any man love the world in this degree, the Love of the Father is not in him; and the friendship of this world is enmity with GOD; and he that is an enemy to the FATHER, we are sure, can never be a disciple to the SON.*

1 Joh. ii.  
15.  
James iv.  
4.

'TIS true indeed, the outward expressions of a man's affection for his Relations and Interests in this world, may be made with more ardent addresses and caresses, and may carry a much greater appearing passion and fervour of zeal with them for the present, than what perhaps he can always express towards the great objects of his religious and devout affections.

fections. But if at the same time a man keeps SERM. III.  
up and maintains within his soul a deep and  
fundamental esteem and reverence for GOD  
and his holy will, and in the last and fullest  
resolution of his judgment, does give the pre-  
ference to his duty above all his other interests,  
'tis certain that man loves GOD better than he  
does all other things, and would desert and  
*forsake all for his sake; even Father, and Mother,*  
*and Wife, and Children, and Houses and Lands,*  
*or any thing else on his account,* tho', at the same  
time, he does not appear to embrace the supreme  
good with so great and sensible a warmth of his  
softer passions; which in all persons is not  
equally a duty to do, because not equally pos-  
sible in all, nor perhaps in it self is it more no-  
ble and excellent than that true reasonable love  
founded more steadily upon judgment and esteem.

THIS then is the sum of what reflections  
I have hitherto made upon this subject, That  
our actual and outward obedience to this  
doctrine of CHRIST, as he requires us to  
*forsake all for his name,* can only be *occasional,*  
and that to certain persons, and at certain  
times, whensoever, and upon whom so severe  
a trial by GOD's providence may fall. But that  
the inward readiness, disposition and resolution  
of our hearts and minds towards it, ought to be  
constant and perpetual, because without this no  
man can be a sincere and hearty Christian.

BUT this is what will appear more fully yet  
under the *Second*, and only particular that



SERM. III. remains yet to be spoken to. To which therefore I now proceed, namely, to make out the utter inconsistency of the contrary disposition to what our LORD here requires in my text with the very being and true profession of Christianity it self; *He cannot be my disciple*;

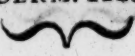
FIRST, Because that temper and constitution of mind, which would prevail with men to prefer any temporary interest to their Religious duty, contradicts the Gospel of CHRIST in its main and principal design, which is to take men off from a fondness for this world, that the power of Divine love may prevail within their hearts, and be superiour to all other affections whatsoever.

SECONDLY, It contradicts our LORD's own pattern and example in the greatest and chiefest lines and instances of it, and therefore cannot be the mark of his *disciple*.

THIRDLY, It stands in direct opposition to his most important precepts; how then is it possible, it should be under his *discipline*?

FOURTHLY and Lastly, It renders our obedience perfectly precarious, casting and leaving it upon the hazard of times and fortune, and so endangers our perseverance in our duty, which CHRIST most requires in a *Disciple* of his, and without which all that he has taught us can avail us nothing.

AND here, First, it contradicts and thwarts the Gospel of CHRIST in its main and principal design, which is to cure man's fondness

ness for this world, and to remove and raise SERM. III. their affections above it, that the Love of  GOD may be the prevailing principle within their hearts. *The End of the Divine command-<sup>1</sup> Tim. i.* *ment is charity out of a pure heart:* The very <sup>5.</sup> drift and aim of the Evangelical institution is to refine and purify the souls of men from gross and carnal loves, and to direct and lead them to the true and worthy object of their desires. And if the Gospel of CHRIST do not *this* within us, it indeed does nothing: If it leaves men under the same pollution it found them in, engag'd on low and mean designs, fix'd and groveling on the earth, and setting up to themselves poor, little, trivial, secular interests, as the great Idols of their heart, and adoration, then it quite fails and sinks from its noble and sublime pretences, nor does it at all rise above the performance of vulgar *Philosophy*. For the *wise men* and the *sages* of the world, both antient and modern, knew well enough that there was a great disorder within the souls of men, which way soever they came by't, and a deep revolt and averſation from the supreme Good; but how to cure this, and restore the mind to its original Rectitude and Perfection, was a matter above the Skill of their most refin'd and exalted Theories. But now this the Gospel of Christ undertakes to do, and actually performs, where it is permitted to have its due course, effect and influence, by making such discoveries of beauty and

SERM. III. and perfection in the Divine Nature, that are  
 enough to fill the Souls of men, to satisfy  
 Psal. lxiii. them *as with marrow and fatness*, and to sa-  
 5. *tiate them with the goodness of the LORD*, as  
 Jer. xxxi. the Holy Prophets in their divine raptures  
 14, —25. delight often to express themselves.

AND this must necessarily shut out and prevent all other claims to our heart and affections, in opposition to it self, as an usurpation upon the right order of nature, and highly injurious to the dictates and interests of all true religion and right reason it self. All desires and inclinations therefore that rise within us, and pretend to rival our obligations to Almighty GOD, and our duty, are so many irregular declensions from the true original state of mind and soul, in which GOD made man at the first; the maintenance or recovery of which, as it is our perfection, will only preserve us and our interest in his favour; and the contrary must for ever leave us the objects of Divine displeasure, rejection, and averfation for ever. Therefore 'tis the  
 Rom. viii. Apostle tells us, that the *Carnal mind is enmi-  
 7. ty with God*, 'tis *neither subject to the law of GOD, nor indeed can be*, that is, while it continues under its present disorder. And if so, then we see the reason why the preference at any time of a wordly interest to the Love of CHRIST, and his commandments, must ever be esteem'd such a fundamental *flaw* in the temper of a man's soul, that no sincerity,



ty, or soundness of Christian Profession or Discipline can subsist in conjunction with it. SERM. III.

SECONDLY, It contradicts our LORD's own pattern and example in the very chiefest lines and instances of it, and therefore 'tis the most distant from the true mark of his *Disciple*. For his whole life and demeanour seem studiously to have declin'd any union or mixture with the pleasures or advantages of this present world : As if he had look'd upon them as the worst enemies to his spiritual and heavenly design ; and therefore he kept himself, as it were, at a perpetual strife and combat with the world, and, as he himself tells his disciples at last, had *quite overcome it*. Joh. xvi. He not only chose to live without the usual<sup>3</sup> solaces and entertainments of art and nature, but espous'd and submitted to the saddest disasters, and severest circumstances of a deserted, persecuted, and suffering state.

AND does this then become a Christian? one who pretends and professes to admire, to love, to imitate nothing more in his Blessed Master, than his chearful embracing, and his patient submission to the Cross, to run from this Cross himself at any time, and to leave his duty and profession behind him? and to be sure only to take care of one, and of this one main point, his worldly interest, whatever comes of it, though to the utter disparagement of himself and his most Holy Faith? The authority and relation of a *Master* does naturally

SERM. III. naturally engage the imitation of those that are truly under his *discipline*; so far sometimes, as to take into themselves his real defects and blemishes too. And if the Pious awe and reverence we pretend to have for our Heavenly Master and Instructor, while we carry his name about us, will not prevail with us to admit the true stamp and impress of his Divine Virtues upon our minds, to what purpose then do we talk of his excellences, and point at, and admire the copy of that Divine Perfection that he has laid before us?

Virg. Æn.  
5.

— *Ubi nunc nobis Deus ille magister*  
*Nequicquam memoratus?* —

Why do we take into our minds and mouths the vain thought or mention of such a great and divine example, when we will not endeavour to be like it? And yet this is the case of every traiterous hypocritical Professor, who talks highly of his SAVIOUR's sublime and heavenly life, and yet is ready to turn away his own face from it, upon every occasion, for the pursuit and security of a sordid, temporary interest. Which evil temper of soul we may consider,

IN the Third place, that it stands in direct opposition to the most important precepts of the Gospel, and then 'tis impossible it should be under the direction of CHRIST's most Holy Discipline. For the Doctrine of the Gospel

Gospel may, by a peculiar force and Emphasis, SERM. III.  
 be stil'd the *Doctrine of the Cross*, inasmuch  
 as it takes upon it nothing more than the de-  
 nial of our selves, and the contradiction, some-  
 times, of *even* our most innocent affections,  
 and desires, when they abate, or slacken our  
 regard to, or stand in the way of our duty;  
 much more then does it oblige us to renounce  
 our sinful ones, which so directly and imme-  
 diately thwart and oppose it. He *that takes* Luke ix.  
*not up his cross and follows me, cannot be my* <sup>23.</sup>

*Disciple*, says our Blessed LORD. *And if thy* Luke xiv.  
*right hand or right eye offend thee, cut off the* <sup>27.</sup>  
*one, and pluck out the other.* Matth. If the dearest xviii. 8, 9.  
 and most intimate objects of our affection, as  
 near and tender to us as the very parts of our  
 natural frame and composition, the very mem-  
 bers of our body; if these prove the occasions  
 of a sin to us, which we can hardly avoid,  
 while they continue with us, though we  
 cannot part with them without the utmost  
 pain and violence to our present nature, yet  
 off with them we must, we must sever them  
 for ever from us, there is no remedy, with-  
 out our utmost ruin. There must be for ever  
 a divorce between them and us, lest, by pre-  
 serving a part, we run the whole upon a des-  
 perate and everlasting destruction.

WE see then here, that our Blessed SA-  
 VIOUR's law admits of no excuse, or reserve,  
 in case of uneasiness, of difficulty, of nearness  
 of relation, of conjunction, or the like, and

O

there-

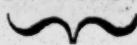


**SERM. III.** therefore we must allow of none. For that demands an entire separation of our wills from whatever may draw us under his displeasure, though it be even *that*, upon which all our present ease, our support, our worldly comfort do entirely depend.

HE therefore that shall venture upon a bold and plain violation of his conscience to secure or advance his present fading, temporary designs or interests, has either forgotten that he is a Christian, or else knows not what that great and worthy Name imports. Nor let a man vainly think with himself, that if he may be allow'd for once to step a little out of the way, a little aside from his duty, and prevaricate a little with his conscience, only for one single turn or so, to maintain and promote his own worldly lasting advantages, he will then do better, and be more careful hereafter; and when he has once provided for the present difficulty, he will then *turn and repent*, and go on for the future in the plain course of his duty, with greater diligence, and make amends for his former transgressions: It may be, O man, whosoever thou art that thus *mockest God and thy self*, that this is the very time, the only occasion that God's Providence has appointed thee to enter the lists, and to stand the fiery trial, and that thou shalt never again be thought worthy of another; that now the eyes of heaven and earth, of God, Angels and Men are upon thee, to observe

## Infidelity and Apostacy.

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serve and mark the issue of the combat assign'd SERM. III.  
 thee, and that, if thou shalt now *start aside*   
*like a broken bow*, thou shalt then be rejected  
 as a *Renagado* for ever, notwithstanding thy  
 after seeming piety!

WE know who has told us, *that whosoever* Matth.  
*shall deny him before men*, that is, shall renounce x. 33.  
 his obedience to avoid present loss or shame,  
 he shall be deny'd himself in the presence of  
 GOD and of his Holy Angels: We are not  
 told whether upon the *First*, or an *after de-*  
*nial*; but this however, I think, may very  
 surely and safely be asserted, and with the  
 best reason maintain'd, that 'tis impossible a  
 man should ever repent sincerely and effectual-  
 ly of but *one* such *base* act of *prevarication*,  
 till he fling up and totally resign all manner of  
 profits or advantages that he ever sav'd, or  
 procur'd by it; for they *are the price of the* — xxvii.  
*blood* of conscience, and the purchase of ini- 6.  
 quity, and not be retain'd: and *Judas* we 4. 5. xxvii. *to*  
 know did all this and more, and yet was not  
 accepted as a penitent.

So very clear, so strong, so frequent are  
 the injunctions and intimations of our blessed  
 LORD against this *one* gross sin of *tempo-*  
*rizing*, of closing with the World against  
 himself and our own duty, that a man  
 must be either an Atheist, or, which is as  
 bad, a Hypocrite, that dares maintain a  
 principle and inclination in his mind; much  
 less can he then a practice in his life, in

SERM. III. contempt or evasion of their strong and Divine Authority.

FOURTHLY, and to conclude, Such a base, disingenuous and revolting temper of Soul as this which I have been here describing, renders our obedience perfectly precarious and uncertain, casting and leaving it upon the chance and hazard of times and fortune; and so endangers our perseverance in our duty, which CHRIST most requires in a Disciple of *His*, and without which, all that he has

Rev. ii. 10. taught us can avail us nothing. *Be faithful unto death*, says our Blessed LORD from heaven, *and I will give thee the crown of life*. But how can that man be faithful! when the only means intended to approve his faith and virtue, the trials and temptations which he meets with in the course of Providence, must infallibly and continually overthrow him, and prove the occasion of his foul Apostacy: For that he stands at any time, is only owing to the absence of a Temptation; let that be present and strong enough, either to work upon his hopes, or to excite his fears, and his virtue and resolution yield and give way immediately, and reel off into the embraces of his present interest. Such a man's spirit is like *a city without walls*, as *Solomon* well compares it, liable to be invaded, and to become the prey and property of the first assault.

Prov. xxv. 28.

BUT is this, think we, the true state and temper of a Christian? What is there requir'd to



to that Character more than a firmness, and SERM. III.  
fulness, and hardiness of soul equal to the dan-  
gers and difficulties from the Enemy, which  
he must be sure to encounter and overcome, in  
the course and progress of his spiritual warfare.  
But now he that leans in the prevailing incli-  
nations of his mind to this world and his se-  
cular interest, is of a party with the enemies  
of his religion, and has lodg'd and harbour'd a  
principle within him, that, upon the first pro-  
posal of a seemingly sufficient and advantage-  
ous return, would not only betray and desert  
his Christian Faith, but, if it were possible,  
even give up the very *Author and founder of*  
*it* to a new contempt and persecution.

THIS is the frail, tottering, unhappy State  
of that man's virtue and religion, who loves  
the present world, and yet calls himself a  
Disciple of the Faith of CHRIST, than  
which there are no two conditions surely that  
draw more contrary ways, or are found less  
consistent with each other in the Event and  
End. In order therefore to rescue our selves,  
and for our deliverance from this miserable  
*Spirit of infirmity*, under which a man is thus  
bent and *bow'd down to the earth, and cannot* Luke xiii.  
*lift up himself*; or at least the more effectually <sup>11.</sup>  
to preserve our selves from falling under it,  
we should often endeavour by close, earnest,  
serious, and devout reflections, to give the  
powers of the world to come, a free and full  
scope and influence upon our minds, and be  
very careful to reduce our opinions of the pre-  
sent

## 94 *A Preservative against, &c.*

SERM. III. sent and future State to a truer estimate. And  
 then we must necessarily sink and abate in our  
 esteem of this world's advantages, how great  
 soever, when we have once our faith quicken'd  
 and enliven'd, and our hearts powerfully af-  
 fected with the prospect of the *glory to be*  
*reveal'd* hereafter. Then we should find our  
 souls rais'd and exalted above this vain and  
 transitory world, above all the temptations,  
 the pleasures and terrors of it : Whilst, with  
 the Holy Prophets, and Apostles, and Saints  
 of GOD, of old, *we look not at the things*  
*that are seen, and are temporal, but at the things*  
*that are not seen, unless with the eye of faith*  
*alone, and are Eternal.* To which most Blessed  
 and most Glorious State, an *inheritance incor-*  
*ruptible and undefil'd,* GOD of his infinite  
 mercy bring us all, through the Grace and  
 Merits of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to  
 whom with the BLESSED FATHER, and  
 HOLY SPIRIT, be ascrib'd *here,* and through-  
 out *all the Churches of the Saints,* all Honour,  
 Praise, and Glory, now and for evermore.  
*Amen.*

*The Peace of GOD, which passeth all under-*  
*standing, keep our hearts and minds in the*  
*knowledge and love of GOD, and of his*  
*SON JESUS CHRIST our LORD; and*  
*the blessing of GOD Almighty, the FA-*  
*THER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST,*  
*be amongst us, and remain with us always.*  
*Amen.*

F I N I S.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

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